

Hafa Adai!

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Pregnant Workers Fairness Act takes effect today **PAGE 7**

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\$1

# Saipan Tribune



BY FERGIE DE LA TORRE/REPORTER  
Acting Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Betty G. Terlaje, extreme right, answers a question raised by CUC board director Simon A. Sanchez, extreme left, during the board's meeting last Friday.

## 'No agency disconnections yet'

By FERGIE DE LA TORRE  
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REPORTER

As of yesterday, not one of the many government agencies that had been issued disconnection notices after failing to pay past

due utility billings has been disconnected yet.

This was confirmed yesterday by acting CUC executive director Betty G. Terlaje in response to *Saipan Tribune's* follow-up questions about her statements during the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

board meeting last Friday.

Terlaje said they would have a meeting about the disconnection notices later that day (yesterday afternoon).

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## Kingman to lead white-collar crimes task force

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES{btr}  
[{btr}](mailto:kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com)  
REPORTER

The Office of the Attorney General says that James Robert Kingman, in his new capacity as assistant attorney general, will

be spearheading the recently established white-collar crime task force, which is mandated with launching investigations and prosecuting cases involving abuse of public funds.

Attorney General Edward

Manibusan announced in a news release yesterday the pending addition of Kingman as an assistant attorney general/special prosecutor

See KINGMAN on Page 4



Kingman

## 'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN

Number of days left until the "touchback" rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:

93

## House confirms Sirok's, Angello's PUC appointments

By FERGIE DE LA TORRE  
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REPORTER

The House of Representatives confirmed yesterday the appointment of former Commonwealth Utilities Corp. counsel James S. Sirok and former Northern Marianas College academic administrator Dr. John

"Jack" Angello to serve as members of the Public Utilities Commission.

With 17 of 18 House members present voting "yes" to the adoption of the committee report, the House confirmed Sirok's appointment to represent Saipan and Northern Islands on the PUC.

See SIROK on Page 4



Sirok

## FINAL SAFETY INSPECTION ONGOING Fukushima wastewater to be released to Pacific soon

By MARI YAMAGUCHI  
Associated Press

TOKYO (AP)—Japanese regulators began the final inspection Wednesday before treated radioactive wastewater is released from the wrecked Fukushima nuclear

plant into the Pacific Ocean.

The inspection began a day after the plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings had installed the last piece of equipment needed for the release—the

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KYODO NEWS VIA AP

An employee of Tokyo Electric Power Company explains about the facility to be used to release treated radioactive water to media at Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Fukushima, northern Japan, Monday, June 26, 2023.

## INSIDE



### BUSINESS

Guam Regional Medical City donates replacement furniture for St. Dominic's Senior Care Home.

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### NATION

Canadian wildfires are causing the worst air in the US in cities like Chicago and Detroit.

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### LIFE & STYLE

Italy has vowed to find and punish a tourist who was filmed carving his name in the Colosseum.

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# Local

## PET OF THE WEEK

### Brooke and Bailey

Sweet Brooke is a spayed 3-year-old boonie female. She is great with children, great with other dogs, and great on a leash.

Big boy Bailey is a chunky, hunky Rottweiler-boonie mix in need of a loving home to guard.

Both Brooke and Bailey are available for adoption at the Saipan Mayor's Office Animal Shelter in As Perdido. Shelter

hours are from Monday to Friday, 7:30am to 4:30pm. Contact them if you are interested in any of these cute pets of the week at (670)-234-3647 (DOGS).

For inquiries about veterinary services please reach out to Saipan Humane Society at [info@saipanhumanesociety.org](mailto:info@saipanhumanesociety.org) or Whatsapp +1 (670) 838-7387.

Saipan Tribune is partnering with Lauren Cabrera, founder of the Saipan Humane Society, in collaboration with the SMO Animal Shelter in As Perdido, to feature their adoptable dogs into loving homes. Whether you are looking for a guard dog, lap dog, hiking buddy, or playful puppy, they most likely have the dog for you!



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Bailey

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## 'We are unable to see true picture of ARPA balance'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

As of Friday last week, the Legislature, especially the House of Representatives, which holds the purse strings of the CNMI government, is unable to see a true picture of the American Rescue Plan Act funding balance of the CNMI government, according to Dave Demapan, who is the fiscal analyst at the Legislative Bureau.

"We don't know what it is. But there is a system in there that can give us that balance.

And that's the purpose of a fund system balance," said Demapan, who provided a snapshot of the fund system and particular financial guidance to the Senate during a special session last week.

Demapan testified at the request of Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) before senators voted on floor leader Corina L. Magofna's (D-Saipan) motion to override Gov. Arnold I. Palacios' veto of Sections 604 and 713 of the budget law.

Section 604 refers to the revised CNMI ARPA Spend-

ing Plan, while Section 713 pertains to giving access to the Legislature to the Munis Financial Management Information System of the CNMI government.

Demapan said he believes that at this stage of the CNMI government's financial condition, it is "very prudent and critical" to have a handle on the amount available to the CNMI.

"We're in deep financial trouble," he added, so it is important to have confidence in the numbers so the Senate can make a better decision

on financial matters.

He said the intent of why Sections 604 and 713 were included in Public Law 23-04, or the revised budget law, has nothing to do with taking away a large chunk of the Finance secretary's responsibilities.

"That's not the intent there. The intent there is basically to give us an eyeball picture of the financial status of the CNMI by looking into the financial system and in this case, for example, the Munis system," Demapan said.

He said a financial system will basically give a financial report on a timely basis as it captures the true picture of the financial spec-

trum of a transaction. In this case, Demapan said, they're talking about ARPA funds that were transmitted to the CNMI in fiscal year 2021.

He said the money would have been already reported and recorded under the JD Edwards system that was the CNMI government's financial management system at the time. Munis came in later so there is a transition period between these two systems.

"So the intent of this law is to give us an eyeball as to see whether the numbers are there, their transactions were properly recorded and then reports can be easily be generated and give us the fund status of

ARPA by the specific Sections 602, 603, 604," Demapan said.

He said 604 is the capital projects fund, while 603 relates to local fiscal recovery fund, and 602 relates to state fiscal recovery fund.

"Those items [amount to] approximately over half a billion of funds that we're talking about," Demapan said.

In asking Demapan to testify, Hofschneider said there is a need to clarify Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita's earlier statement whether or not there is still any ARPA funds left, because, as disclosed by Norita herself, there is still some.

"It kind of created a question moving forward, but nevertheless, we went ahead and blessed the requests from the House on House Bill 23-31, HS1, which is essentially became Public Law 23-04," he said.

Hofschneider asked Demapan to guide the senators as to where the CNMI is at with this ARPA funding status.

He said he understands that the administration executed cost-containment measures to lessen the CNMI government's financial dilemma.

That was the reason the administration cited why it let go of some employees and terminated the "infamous airline contract and so forth."

Hofschneider said before making the vote on the motion to override, he wants Demapan to articulate some of the documents that are before the Senate.

Hofschneider was among the four senators who voted "yes" to the motion to override Palacios' veto. With four voting "no," and three absences, the motion to override the veto did not pass the Senate. Six "yes" votes were needed to override the veto.

## Bill seeks to provide VA medical care to veterans in FAS

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A bipartisan group of lawmakers have introduced a legislation that authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide medical care to U.S. veterans living in the Freely Associated States.

Currently, the VA is not legally permitted to provide direct care to U.S. military veterans located in the FAS, which covers the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

The proposed bill, introduced in the U.S. Congress by U.S. Rep. Ami Bera, M.D. (D-CA), Ed Case (D-HI), Aumua Amata Radewagen (R-AS), Jill N. Tokuda (D-HI), and Steve Womack (R-AR), is called the "Care for Compact of Free Association Veterans Act."

"Despite serving in the U.S. military, veterans from the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia lack access to comprehensive VA medical benefits that are afforded to veterans," said Bera, who is a Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Indo-Pacific. "I am proud to stand alongside Reps. Case, Radewagen, Tokuda, and

Womack and Sens. Schatz, Murkowski, Hirono, and Boozman as we introduce the Care for COFA Veterans Act. This bipartisan legislation aims to extend essential medical care and health services to our deserving veterans in the Freely Associated States. We have a duty to honor our commitment to those who have served in the U.S. military."

"For far too many veterans from the Marshall Islands, Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia, in-person medical care means finding the money to afford the fare on an infrequent flight to cross the ocean to receive VA care from the VA medical facility in my state of Hawaii," said Case. "Aside from being unfair, this does not keep our nation's promise to adequately care for all eligible veterans. Our [FAS] veterans who proudly served in our [U.S.] military should not be so disadvantaged in accessing the level of benefits afforded to their fellow veterans who reside in the U.S. proper. This measure acknowledges these shortcomings and lays a foundation to begin adequately addressing access to care. It is my hope that this measure will become law so that our country can follow through on our promise to care for any veter-

an no matter where he or she calls home."

"This is common sense bill, that helps us keep our national commitment to our veterans, no matter where they live," said Radewagen. "Pacific Islanders, including those from the [FAS], much like my home in American Samoa, serve in the military at very high rates, and deserve our support and appreciation. I want to thank [Rep.] Dr. Bera for his dedicated leadership on this important matter and other Pacific Islands issues."

"Citizens of Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia have served with honor and distinction in our military since World War II, and they have contributed so much to the deeply shared interests and values between our peoples as enshrined in the Compacts of Free Association," said Tokuda. "Yet, for far too long, these veterans who choose to return to their home countries have been denied the dignity and health care coverage, and are forced to pay out of pocket and travel to Guam or Hawaii to receive any medical care from the Department of Veterans Affairs. I am proud to join my colleagues in introducing this bill that would

ensure our country can fulfill its sacred vow to those who serve in uniform and begin providing the health care these veterans deserve."

"I'm proud to cosponsor the Care for COFA Veterans Act, which would provide veterans from the Freely Associated States access to health care in their home countries. FAS citizens serve in our Armed Forces at some of the highest per capita rates. These veterans volunteered to serve our country and they've earned our support now," said Womack.

The FAS do not have their own militaries and grant exclusive military control and strategic positioning to the United States. FAS citizens can serve in the U.S. military, which they do at the highest of volunteer rates per capita. The Care for COFA Veterans Act would encourage the VA to work with the State Department and the governments of Palau, RMI, and FSM to chart a path forward on legal issues to facilitate telehealth services and medications provided by clinicians located in the United States. One year after enactment of the Act, the VA would be required to provide a report to Congress on the options considered, chosen approaches, and resources necessary to deliver services to COFA veterans.

"Many Palauans have served in the U.S. military and many more continue that tradition of service. In fact, we have one of the highest—if not the highest—service rates compared to U.S. States and territories. And yet Palauans who have retired from military service can't access in Pa-

lau the healthcare that they can receive in the U.S. This makes it difficult for them to return home where they can continue to contribute so much. This is why I so strongly support the bill by Reps. Bera, Radewagen, Case, Tokuda, and Womack to require the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a plan to provide healthcare services to U.S. military veterans from the three nations freely associated with the U.S. in their home countries," said Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr.

"The Republic of the Marshall Islands expresses our deep appreciation to Reps. Bera, Radewagen, Case, Tokuda, and Womack for their leadership in providing access to health services for Marshallese veterans. Our citizens serve with honor and pride in the U.S. armed forces at rates that far exceed the national average, yet they are denied the U.S. veterans benefits for which they are eligible if they return home after service. We thank these Members of Congress for recognizing the contributions of Marshallese citizens to the United States and urge quick passage of this important legislation," said RMI Ambassador Gerald Zackios.

"Micronesians are extremely proud to serve in the U.S. military. Unfortunately, our veterans who return home to Micronesia after serving in the U.S. military have great difficulty in accessing the health care they have earned through their service. (PR)

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

## SCS HONOR LIST

Saipan Community School's 2022/2023 Q4 Honor List

### PRINCIPAL'S LIST (4.00)

(No grade below a "A")  
■ Iyani Muna-4th grade  
■ Hiyori Okuma-5th grade  
■ Micaela Tenorio-5th grade  
■ Jeong Bin Park-8th grade  
■ Joshua Yoo-8th grade

### "A" Honor Roll (3.50 to 3.99)

(No grades below a "B")  
■ Jihan Delos Reyes-4th grade  
■ Dennis Guo-4th grade  
■ Hee Soo Han-4th grade  
■ Seung Woo Lee-4th grade  
■ Bailey Parsons-4th grade

■ Keaven Punzalan-4th grade  
■ Olivia Um-4th grade  
■ Ryan Macaranas-5th grade  
■ Claire Oh-5th grade  
■ Vivian Chung-6th grade  
■ Tony Xiao-6th grade  
■ Jin Choi-7th grade  
■ Daniel Nae-7th grade  
■ Erine So-7th grade  
■ Annabella Tudela-7th grade  
■ Richard Zhao-7th grade  
■ Byul An-8th grade  
■ Hannah Chae-8th grade  
■ Ma'Ase De'Oro-8th grade  
■ Morgan Finco-8th grade  
■ David Park-8th grade  
■ Eugene So-8th grade  
■ Joan Song-8th grade  
■ David Ye-8th grade  
■ Sharon Zhang-8th grade

### "B" Honor Roll (3.00 to 3.49)

(No grades below a "C")  
■ Daniel Guo-4th grade  
■ Willie Guo-4th grade  
■ Joshua McDonald-4th grade  
■ Chaeyeon Ko-4th grade  
■ Alexander Diaz-5th grade  
■ Wilson Guo-5th grade  
■ David Lee-5th grade  
■ Lily Lim-5th grade  
■ Alyssa Brasuell-6th grade  
■ Elijah Pangelinan-6th grade  
■ William Guo-7th grade  
■ Elin Kim-7th grade  
■ Patrick McDonald-7th grade  
■ Jihun Park-7th grade  
■ Emma Sablan-7th grade  
■ Jose Sablan-7th grade

### IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Petition to Appoint General Guardianship for: ] FCD GU ] CIVIL ACTION ] NO. 23-0234

R.M., Minor Child. ] AMENDED NOTICE ] OF HEARING

By: ]  
LAToya RUTH ]  
LANIYO CANTU, ]  
Petitioner. ]

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on **August 9, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.**, in Courtroom 217A before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 15th day of June, 2023.

Patrick V. Diaz  
Clerk of Court

/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

### Operations Manager (Saipan, MP)

Plan, direct, manages, and coordinates the operations of the company such as but are not limited to formulating policies, overseeing daily operations, planning the use of materials and human resources. Improve operational systems, processes and best practices that guarantee the company well-being. Recruit, interview, and train personnel. Prepare and process employees USCIS work authorization documents. Assess staff performance and provide coaching and guidance to ensure maximum efficiency. Ensure the smooth and adequate flow of information within the company to facilitate other business operations. Make work schedule for laundromat employees. Monitor, encode, handle, and prepare monthly expense report on assigned accounts. Review and revise leasing documents such as rental agreement, related documents & forms. Prepare monthly rental billing, collect rents, and summarize monthly collections and tenants accounts. Review & summarize assigned accounts monthly reports. Ensure operations adhere to company policies & regulations and complies with all Governmental regulations and requirements. Ensure all licenses, permits, and regulating agencies compliance are timely filed, renewed and complied. Attend seminars, meetings, public hearings and other related forums to keep abreast and updated with relevant changes that will impact business operations. Deal, handle and correspond with private and Gov't agencies. Review company agreements and contracts; make analysis and recommendations for revisions & improvements. Provide assistance and reports to executives & managers with operations and administrative duties. Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, Mathematics, or Economics with 5-year experience in the position.

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## Japan market picks up after lifting of COVID restrictions

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES  
kimberly\_esmores@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The CNMI's Japan market has been slow to pick up steam since its reopening last year, mainly because of COVID-19 restrictions that were in place. However, with those restrictions now completely lifted, the Marianas Visitors Authority says it has already seen an increase in bookings to the CNMI.

In an interview with MVA managing director Chris Concepcion, he said the Japanese government removed all COVID-19 restrictions in May, and MVA has since been seeing Japanese visitor arrivals pick up.

"We want to make sure that we sustain that momentum going forward so we have a diversified portfolio," he said. "The load factors are getting better monthly."

In May, the CNMI saw a spike in visitor arrivals from



MARK FARMER

From over the Saipan Channel and looking north toward Garapan and Mt. Tapochau, the western portion of Saipan enjoys a sunny Sunday morning as seen from an inbound airline flight.

Japan, Concepcion said, making it the second-best arrival month for the Japan market since COVID-19.

"We have also seen bookings for June pick up into July and we hope and expect that all our marketing projects going in Japan will help continue that momentum," he said.

Concepcion said that that United Airlines, which currently has a contract with the CNMI to charter weekly

flights between Saipan and Narita, have reported load factors of around 45% to 55% in the past few months. That changed in June, with load factor being around 70%, which he says just proves that the market is picking back up.

"When they first opened, they anticipated much lower load factors but they are doing way better than expected, according to United. We're hoping now that [with]

COVID restrictions lifted, we'll see a much healthier load factor," he said.

Concepcion said MVA expects the market to continue to improve these next few months as August is usually high travel season for the Japan market.

"With that said, the outbound numbers from the Japan market is still not where we want them to be, even for destinations like Hawaii and Guam, they're down. But it's picking up slowly and we just have to maintain that momentum," he said.

MVA is even more hopeful that the Japan market's rising momentum will only continue, now that United and MVA have an understanding that United will continue flying its Narita-Saipan route until after the expiration of their contract in December.

"Our current contract with United for our Japan-Saipan flights is set to end in December. They haven't published anything about extending be-

yond Dec. 31, 2023, but we have an understanding that they will be continuing those flights. We're just waiting for them to load the fares, publish the schedules, and from

there we will know more," Concepcion said.

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

## SIROK

From page 1

Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan) did not vote. Reps. Edwin K. Propst (Ind Saipan) and Malcom Jason Omar (Ind-Saipan) were absent but excused.

With all 18 House members present voting "yes" to the adoption of the committee report, the House confirmed Angello's appointment to represent Saipan and Northern Islands on the PUC.

The report prepared by the House's Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee, and the Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications Committee, recommended the two's confirmation.

The appointment also requires the confirmation by the Senate; it has not done so yet.

If also confirmed by the Senate, Sirok will serve a four-year term that will expire on April 3, 2026, while Angello will serve the remainder of a four-year term that will expire on April 2, 2024.

At the House session, Oscar M. Babauta, who is the special assistant for the administration of Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, said that the PUC has been idle for quite some time now and he appealed to House members to approve the committee report as people are hurting due to soaring utility costs. Babauta said the people of the CNMI will hopefully gain some relief as a result of Sirok's and Angello's actions in the future as PUC members.

The PUC is an independent commission established by the Legislature many years ago to regulate utilities in the CNMI.

## KINGMAN

From page 1

to head up the task force, which was established by the Office of the Attorney General, the Office of the Public Auditor, and the Department of Public Safety.

The task force was created to investigate and prosecute white-collar crimes, government corruption, and financial crimes.

"Attorney General Manibusan, the temporary Public Auditor, and [Department of Public Safety] Commissioner Clement Bermudes [have] announced the formation of the task force. The collaboration and partnership among the law enforcement agencies are vital to holding those accountable for waste and abuse of public funds and other criminal conduct," the statement said.

As the managing prosecutor for the task force, Kingman will supervise task force

members in the investigation and prosecution of public corruption cases.

"He will also be reviewing allegations of abuse relating to [American Rescue Plan Act] funds and will continue to represent the Commonwealth in the prosecution of former governor Ralph Torres," said the OAG.

The OAG believes that hiring Kingman to serve as an AAG is ultimately in the interest of the Commonwealth and fulfills the goal under the constitution for a clean and transparent government.

In addition, speaking of concerns raised about the legality of Kingman's appointment, Manibusan claims that Kingman's hiring follows the process for the employment of exempt employees.

"As attorney general, I am empowered under the Constitution to hire employees and to prosecute cases. AAG positions, including Mr. Kingman's position as assis-

tant attorney general/special prosecutor, is exempt from the civil service system. His hiring follows the process for the employment of exempt employees," he said.

Kingman holds a law degree from Harvard Law School and a bachelor's degree from Rhodes College.

He has served as an assistant district attorney in Texas handling felony cases including white collar crime, fraud, money laundering, and child sexual abuse cases.

Kingman, for his part, assures the community that he will give his new role his all and is grateful for the trust bestowed upon him in appointing him as head of this new task force.

"I am grateful to have been appointed to lead the new multi-agency public integrity law enforcement task force. Though my plan when I arrived was only to try a case as special prosecutor, I am thankful to be stepping into an

expanded role. I have been involved with efforts surrounding anti-corruption, public transparency, and accountable governance since 2010. My convictions on these issues are deeply held. This is a unique community that has welcomed and inspired me in the short time that I have been fortunate enough to experience it. With this new set of responsibilities, I hope to use my experience to help this singular place move toward the government and leadership that it deserves. It is a substantial task. I will give it my all," he said.

Meanwhile, Torres' defense team has raised questions about this new appointment, such as why Kingman's salary is higher than of the chief prosecutor for the OAG's criminal division, why was Kingman not hired as an AAG to begin with, and more.

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

## AGENCY

From page 1

At the CUC board meeting Friday, Terlaje disclosed that almost all the government agencies that were issued disconnection notices have disputed or are contesting the notices, insisting that their numbers do not match with CUC's numbers.

In some cases, she said, the argument was that the unpaid utility bill was that of a different agency, or it's a different customer. "However, we are going through each one of them," said Terlaje, adding that they had already met with these agencies. She did not specifically mention at the meeting the names of the agencies.

Last May 10 and 11, CUC issued disconnection notices to the Office of the Attorney General, Northern Marianas College, the Marianas Visitors Authority, Northern Islands Mayor's Office, Northern Mariana Islands Settlement Fund, Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission, Department of Public Lands, Office of the Mayor of Rota, Office of the Mayor of Saipan, and Office of the Mayor of Tinian and Aguiguan.

CUC gave these agencies until last May 24, 2023 to pay or settle their past due utility billings, or else power and water services would be disconnected the following day, May 25.

Last May 3, CUC sent a disconnection notice to the Judiciary for unpaid \$2.4 million utility services. The disconnection did not push through by the May 18, 2023, deadline after the Ju-

diciary disputed the \$1.6 million billing for the Guma' Hustisia building on Saipan.

In some cases, Terlaje said Friday, some agencies have been trying to work something out with other departments that are already the new tenants of the buildings.

Terlaje said if these agencies did not close up the account in those facilities, then the burden of paying is still with them as they are the applicants for the services.

She said there are still a handful that the CUC accounting department is reconciling with their assigned staff. After reconciling, they will determine as to whether to pursue the disconnection or not, she added.

Terlaje said a lot of these agencies have also been waiting for the allotments from the central government. "Our response is that they have to work something out," she said.

Terlaje said once they have finalized looking into the dispute, they will give them another timeline to work with Finance.

"That's between them and Finance. We're just going to wait for that time to come," she said.

Last April 19, CUC also served notices of disconnection to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and Department of Public Works due to unpaid power and water services amounting to \$53.6 million and \$1.2 million as of March 31, 2023, respectively. CHCC and DPW were given until May 4, 2023, to pay or settle their billings.

CHCC settled with CUC, while DPW, through Finance, disputed the amount, avoiding disconnection.

## FUKUSHIMA

From page 1

outlet of the undersea tunnel dug to discharge the wastewater 1 kilometer (1,094 yards) offshore.

TEPCO said the Nuclear Regulation Authority inspectors were to examine the equipment related to the treated water transfer and its safety systems as part of their three-day inspection through Friday. The permit for releasing the water could be issued about a week later, and TEPCO could start discharging the water soon after, though an exact date has not been decided.

The plan has faced fierce

protests from local fishing groups concerned about safety and reputational damage. The government and TEPCO in 2015 promised not to release the water without consent from the fishing community, but many in the fishing community say the plan was pushed regardless. Neighboring South Korea, China and some Pacific Island nations have also raised safety concerns.

Government and utility officials say the wastewater, currently stored in about 1,000 tanks at the plant, must be removed to prevent any accidental leaks and to make room for the plant's decommissioning. They say the treated but still

slightly radioactive water will be diluted to levels safer than international standards and will be released gradually into the ocean over decades, making it harmless to people and marine life.

Some scientists say the impact of long-term, low-dose exposure to radionuclides is unknown and the release should be delayed. Others say the release plan is safe but call for more transparency, including allowing outside scientists to join in sampling and monitoring the release.

Japan has sought support from the International Atomic Energy Agency to gain credibility and ensure that safety measures meet internation-

al standards. IAEA has dispatched several missions to Japan since early 2022, and its final evaluation report is expected soon, though the organization has no power to stop the plan. IAEA chief Rafael Mariano Grossi is expected to visit Japan in early July to meet Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and visit the plant.

A massive earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011, destroyed the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant's cooling systems, causing three reactors to melt and their cooling water to be contaminated and leak continuously. The water is collected, treated and stored in the tanks, which will reach their capacity in early 2024.



## 'Being politically correct has no place after inauguration'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE [ferdie\\_delatorre@saipantribune.com](mailto:ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com) REPORTER

The word war between Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) and Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita appears to be heating up, with the senator reminding Norita the election is over and being politically correct has no place after the inauguration.

"This government belongs to the people. We preached rebuilding trust, transparency, and accountability. The override was not an exercise in futility," said DeLeon Guerrero in response to Saipan Tribune's request for comments about Norita's letter to her about the American Rescue Plan Act issue.

DeLeon Guerrero said the \$93 million ARPA as stated by Norita in the letter Tuesday as budgetary versus cash is misleading.

DeLeon Guerrero pointed out that ARPA is actual fiat currency and the ARPA sheet provided is an ARPA fund balance, not a budgetary balance nor is it a projected revenue.

She said this means the \$93 million should reconcile with the cash in the bank as of the May 31, 2023, ARPA fund balance sheet.

The president said the \$24 million as reported in Norita's letter is the ARPA cash book balance.

At this point, she said, because this is actual fiat currency from the U.S. Treasury, the difference between \$93 million and \$24 million is \$69 million.

"Theoretically, the \$69 million should still be in [the] bank," DeLeon Guerrero said.

She said definition of a fund balance is limitations of available resources to be reported in a fund balance, here being the ARPA fund balance sheet.

The president said the Senate fiscal response team's main purpose is to fast-track the work and review of fiscal year 2023 budget, hence the passage of the modified fiscal year 2023 budget.

DeLeon Guerrero cited two reasons why the ARPA override was important.

First, she said, the Palacios-Apatang administration had no objection upon taking office to the participation of the Legislature. Second is because there is no supporting ARPA financial statement to give the Legislature a true picture of the ARPA bank balance and ARPA fund balance. She said there is a longstanding list

of financial reports that her office has requested.

In fact, DeLeon Guerrero said, she gave Norita a hard

copy of the pending reports list during their meeting at her office with the Senate Federal Emergency Management

Community Disaster Loan Special Committee, as a reminder that they are still waiting for them.

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

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# Red Cross donates laptops to Office of Veterans Affairs

The Office of Veterans Affairs received two laptop computers donated by the Northern Mariana Islands Chapter of the American Red Cross as part of their continued support for local veterans and the Red Cross's Service to the Armed Forces program.

"The Red Cross, through its 130-year history of supporting the military, is proud to partner and support your Office of Veterans Affairs," said American Red Cross - NMI Chapter executive director John Hirsh.

The laptops will be used to help provide more efficient services to veterans in the Commonwealth through expedited processes, improved communication channels, and ultimately improve the overall experience for those who have served our country.

"Our mission at the Veterans Affairs Office is to enhance the quality of life and the well-being of our military, veterans, and their families. We thank the Red Cross board of directors and executive director John Hirsh, and we are

proud and honored by their long history and continued support of the Armed Forces. We thank them for their kind donations of two laptop computers that we received today to help us improve services for our veterans," said OVA executive director Frances Sablan. (PR)

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
American Red Cross - NMI Chapter executive director John Hirsh, right, turns over two laptops to the Office of Veterans Affairs.



By MARK SCOTT  
GUAM NATIONAL GUARD

**TAMUNING, Guam**—One month after Typhoon Mawar lashed the U.S. territory of Guam with 140 mph winds, recovery efforts are still underway to restore critical services. Among those supporting the response effort are Spc. Alora Finey and Pfc. Chase Camacho, combat medics with the Guam National Guard.

"I knew immediately after the typhoon, after seeing all of the damage, that I needed to help out," said Finey. "I wanted to help out."

Finey and Camacho are on Territorial Active Duty—a type of National Guard mobilization ordered by the governor during emergencies—tasked to help Guam Memorial Hospital cope with the surge of patients following the Category 4 storm. They help the full-time emergency room staff conduct triage, collect vitals, transport patients, and more.

Sheryl De Guzman, unit supervisor of the GMH Emergency Room, said the surge of patients resulting from Typhoon Mawar has not been seen since the COVID-19 pandemic. With staff already stretched thin, De Guzman says Finey and Camacho are making a difference.

"They really make a difference, especially with a lot of

## Guam Guard medics assist with hospital surge after Typhoon Mawar



MARK SCOTT  
Combat Medics from the Guam National Guard and members of the Guam Memorial Hospital emergency room staff work together in the wake of Typhoon Mawar June 21, 2023.

patients reporting into the ER. But we're striving and surviving, just like everyone else," said De Guzman.

Camacho, whose mother also serves in the Guam National Guard, said the staff at Guam Memorial Hospital has treated him like family, and he's learned a lot of skills from the partner agency.

"I would like to say thank

you to all the nurses and the ER staff here. They've been really supportive," said Camacho. And thank you to the Guard for giving me the opportunity to give back."

Finey and Camacho are part of approximately 200 Guam Army and Air National Guard troops involved with typhoon recovery efforts, alongside U.S. Army Pacific's Task

Force West and Joint Region Marianas, in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the lead agencies of the Guam government under Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero. Missions have included traffic control, route clearance and debris translocation, emergency commodity distribution, roof repairs and more.

is unknown and the release should be delayed. Others say the release plan is safe but call for more transparency, including allowing outside scientists to join in sampling and monitoring the release.

Japan has sought support from the International Atomic Energy Agency to gain credibility and ensure that safety measures meet international standards.

A massive earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011, destroyed the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant's cooling systems, causing three reactors to melt and their cooling water to be contaminated and leak continuously. The water is collected, treated and stored in the tanks, which will reach their capacity in early 2024.

## Fukushima nuclear plant operator says equipment to release treated wastewater into sea is complete

**TOKYO (AP)**—All equipment needed for the release into the sea of treated radioactive wastewater from the wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant has been completed and will be ready for a safety inspection by Japanese regulators this week, the plant operator said Monday, as opposition to the plan continues in and outside Japan over safety concerns.

Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings said it installed the last piece of an undersea tunnel dug to release the water offshore, completing the construction of the necessary equipment that began last August.

A mandatory safety inspec-

tion of the equipment will begin Wednesday, said Nuclear Regulation Authority Chairman Shinichi Yamanaka, who visited the Fukushima Daiichi plant last week.

If everything goes well, TEPCO is expected to receive a safety permit for the release about a week after the inspection ends, officials said. Discharge of the treated water is expected to begin this summer, although the exact date has not been set.

The plan has faced fierce protests from local fishing groups concerned about safety and reputational damage. Nearby countries, including

South Korea, China and some Pacific Island nations, have also raised safety concerns.

Government and utility officials say the wastewater, currently stored in about a thousand tanks at the plant, must be removed to prevent any accidental leak in case of an earthquake and to make room for the plant's decommissioning. They say the treated but still slightly radioactive water will be diluted to safe levels and will be released gradually into the ocean over decades, making it harmless to people and marine life.

Some scientists say the impact of long-term, low-dose exposure to radionuclides

## Tribute Zumba fundraiser today for Sanje

A Zumba Marathon Fundraiser will be held today, Thursday, from 6pm to 7:30pm at The Roundhouse at the Garapan Park as a tribute to the late Bobby Nacario Sanje, a longtime dance instructor and Zumba leader on Saipan.

According to Joseph Caranto, a Zumba instructor who is one of the organizers of the Thursday event, tickets are being sold at \$10 each, and the proceeds will be given to the family. Other Zumba groups, as well as Sanje's Zumba group, Fitness in Motion,

will reportedly participate in tonight's event.

Fitness in Motion has participated in past Liberation Day festivities, Taste of the Marianas, etc.

It was reported that Sanje was a great motivator and would often call members if they fail to attend a Zumba session. Patient and understanding, he reminded his group participants to engage in Zumba for health benefits.

The funeral Mass for Sanje was held Monday at the San Antonio church. (PR)

## 6 NMI students make OSU honor roll

**CORVALLIS, Ore**—Six students from the CNMI have made the scholastic honor roll for spring 2023 at Oregon State University. The six are:

■ Erin Shimona L. Agulto, junior, Human Development and Family Science;  
■ Aaron Paul G. Cayading, freshman, Psychology;  
■ Robert Lawrence B. Deleon Guerrero, senior, Agricultural Sciences;  
■ Nicole Kim, senior,

Psychology;

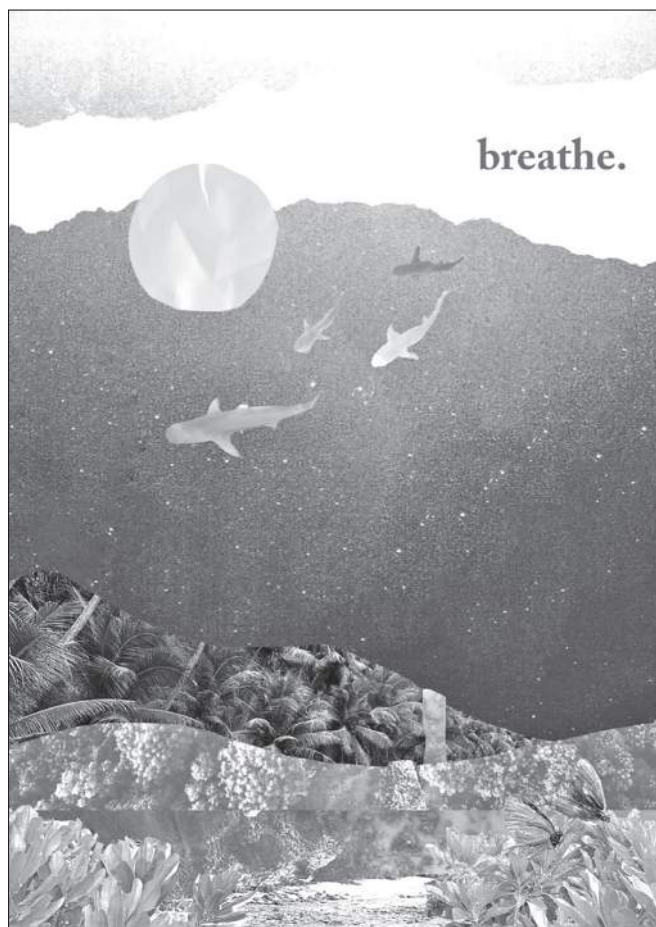
■ Erica Jonette C. Leon Guerrero, senior, Environmental Sciences.

■ Leagine Francia D. Mendiola, junior, Business Information Systems.

A total of 11,660 students earned a B-plus (3.5) or better to make the listing. To be on the honor roll, students must carry at least 6 graded hours of course work. (PR)



## UOG Press suicide prevention project continues with journal and workshop



The cover of *breathe.*

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

The University of Guam Press will be launching *breathe.*, a journal intended to be used as a space for safe expression and creativity through art and writing.

The launch will be held at the Guam Public Library's Hagatña branch on Friday, July 7, from 4pm to 6pm.

The journal is inspired by the poetry book and short film *Dry Nights* by Pep Borja and incorporates a collage of poetry, photography, and various artforms to spark creativity. Its pages are intended to inspire of expression and celebrate the beauty of island life, with creative prompts intended to help readers reflect on their lives, loved ones, and things that bring them joy.

"During times of crisis, it is important to take a moment to reflect on our experiences and find strength and comfort in the gift that is our breath. We hope the *breathe.* journal can be a space for people, especially our youth, to find solace and the freedom to express themselves," said UOG Press director of publishing Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero.

The journal was published by the University of Guam Press with support from the Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center's Focus on Life Program and is part of UOG Press's continued efforts to raise awareness about the value of creative expression in suicide prevention.

"This journal is part of a larger initiative the Press

started in 2021 to raise awareness about our island's high suicide rates and the value of creative expression in suicide prevention. We hope it will be a useful resource for organizations working with youth and for our wider community as we recover from the devastation of Typhoon Mawar," Leon Guerrero said.

The UOG Press will be hosting an art and poetry collage workshop using prompts provided in the journal. Interested participants can email [uogpress@triton.uog.edu](mailto:uogpress@triton.uog.edu) to register.

The journal will be available online and in local bookstores starting the day after the launch and retails for \$12. For every \$12 sale, \$2 will be donated to upcoming suicide prevention projects and partnerships, and 500 copies of the journal will be donated to youth and community organizations across the island.

For more information on how to receive community copies for your organization, contact Via Justine De Fant at [defantv@triton.uog.edu](mailto:defantv@triton.uog.edu) or (671) 735-2153.

The University of Guam Press publishes an array of academic and literary books and journals with a specific focus on the unique history, environment, peoples, cultures, and languages of the islands that make up the Western Pacific region. Visit [uogpress.com](http://uogpress.com) to learn more about them and browse their wide selection of local art and literature. (UOG)

## Pregnant Workers Fairness Act in effect starting today

WASHINGTON—The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act will take effect today, expanding long-overdue protections to ensure that workers experiencing pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions have the right to reasonable accommodations in the workplace.

The law was signed by President Joe Biden last year, and as it goes into effect today, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission will begin accepting charges of discrimination under this new statute for incidents that occurred on or after June 27, 2023.

The PWFA requires covered employers to provide reasonable accommodations to a worker's known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, unless the accommodation will cause the employer an undue hardship. This law builds upon existing protections against pregnancy discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

"I am honored to lead the EEOC as we enforce a new civil rights law. For workers and job applicants, the PWFA will help ensure economic security at a critical time in their lives," said EEOC chair Charlotte A. Burrows. "The EEOC stands ready to support employers as they carry out the PWFA's directives and to support workers in receiving the accommodations they are entitled to under the PWFA."

In addition to accepting charges, the agency released new additional educational resources, including tips for workers to request accommodations, a "Know Your Rights" video series, and a revised "Know Your Rights" poster required to be posted in most workplaces. Previously released resources include a Q&A on "What You Should Know about the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act," an infographic for employers, and an informational poster about the PWFA for healthcare providers' offices.

The EEOC is the federal agency designated by Congress with implementing and enforcing the PWFA. If an applicant or employee believes they have been denied a reasonable accommodation for pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, they can contact the agency at 800-669-4000 (ASL video-phone 844-234-5122), or visit the website for more information on how to file a charge of discrimination.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov). Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our email updates.

See more at <https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-pregnant-workers-fairness-act> (PR)

### TIPS FOR ASKING FOR A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

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## Free summer program for incoming 9th-grade students

The University of Guam TRIO Educational Talent Search is offering a week of summer activities for incoming high school freshmen through the Tollai Tiningo' (Bridge of Knowledge) program.

The weeklong summer program is free for students who qualify. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the program is designed to identify and assist students who have the potential to succeed in higher education. Two-thirds of the program's participants must be potential first-generation college students (neither parent graduated from college) and from low-income families.

A guardian or parent must fill out the application form by clicking this link: [url.uog.edu/rv1P7N](http://url.uog.edu/rv1P7N)

The program aims to provide fun activities to help the students transition from middle school to high school by getting them engaged in helpful topics and skills-building activities. The students will also



UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

Students are seen participating in a prior Educational Talent Search summer program at the University of Guam for incoming high school freshmen.

learn about high school course selection, credit policies, and other important topics.

"Students who attended our previous Summer Tollai Tiningo' program at the University of Guam have mentioned they learned so much

about preparing for high school which has also piqued their interest in attending the University of Guam and getting a college degree," said Erickson Mae A. Aquino, ETS project coordinator.

The deadline to apply is

5pm on July 3, 2023.

For more information, contact:

■ Erickson Mae A. Aquino  
■ ETS project coordinator  
■ Phone: (671) 735-2246  
■ Email: [trioets@triton.uog.edu](mailto:trioets@triton.uog.edu) (PR)



# Opinion

Hafa Adahi!

## Saipan Tribune

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### EDITORIAL

## A sad end for the Titan submersible, but a titanic level of international cooperation

Submerged in the sadness for the loss of five people aboard the Titan submersible, and the criticism of the risky and poorly certified expedition to the wreck of the Titanic, was an extraordinary international rescue effort.

Last week saw a heartening reminder of what nations can do together, a primer in how different government agencies can co-operate both with the private sector and with each other in an all-out, no-expense-spared attempt to save lives.

In a matter of days, aircraft and a flotilla of rescue ships assembled some 400 miles off the coast of Newfoundland, searching for a craft hardly much bigger than a minivan that had been lost somewhere in one of the most unforgiving and remote areas of the planet.

The search field in the North Atlantic had a depth of some 12,500 feet, all the way down to the cold and dark place where the Titanic had rested since it hit an iceberg in April 1912. This was far different than a typical Coast Guard rescue with watercraft on the ocean's surface, or a salvage from a few hundred feet.

The time-bound rescue effort, which captivated most of the planet, involved close cooperation between U.S. and Canadian authorities, between Navy and Coast Guards, government officials and private businesses. It involved teams and equipment from at least five countries: Canada, the U.S. Britain, France and Germany.

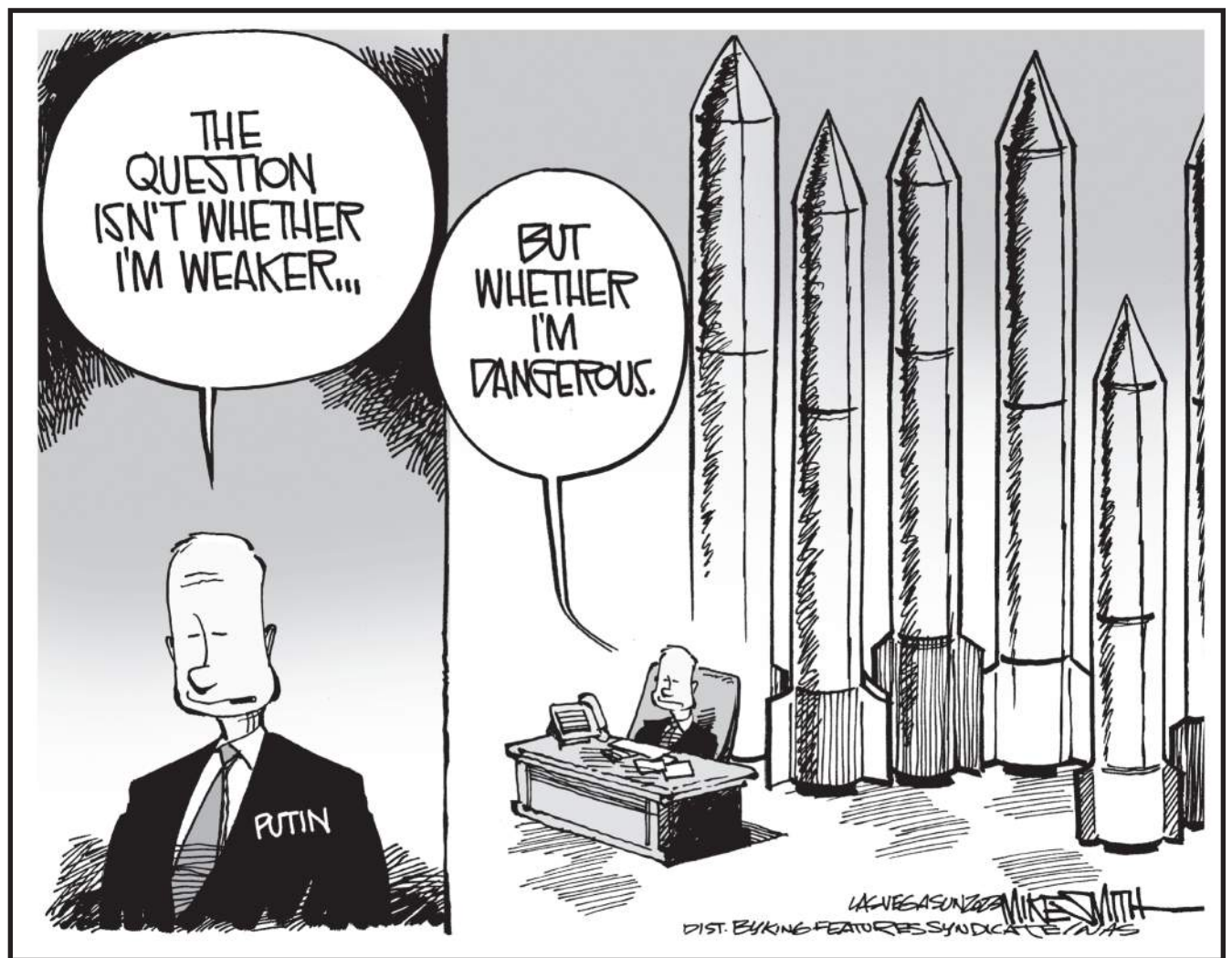
Search gear arrived at breakneck speed for rescue teams, including remotely operated underwater vehicles, salvage machinery capable of lifting the Titan from the ocean bed, decompression chambers and specialized health care facilities. Though distraught, family members must have felt enormous comfort and gratitude for the scale and competence of this international response, even though the chance of finding people alive was remote from the start.

There was another extraordinary aspect to this story. On Thursday it emerged that the U.S. Navy had "detected an acoustic signature consistent with an implosion" on the previous Sunday, a remarkable piece of detection in itself but also an indicator that the hope of finding the five men on the Titan alive was remote indeed.

Although the Navy relayed this information to the Coast Guard command, it was decided that the evidence was insufficiently definitive to call off the search and rescue operation. In other words, the sounds might not have come from the lost craft. So the rescue effort continued.

Remarkably, given the massive amount of media attention, all of this was kept discreet, both out of compassion for the families and as a consequence of the rescuers' creed that where there is a chance, you keep going. It was only once a remotely operated vehicle found the debris field, which the U.S. Navy had anticipated, that the search was called off and the lives declared lost.

See SAD on Page 9



## Time to step forward and take a stand

» Don't let the scourge of malnutrition and disasters be the end of Asia-Pacific's least developed, landlocked, and small island developing states

As the world moves beyond the halfway mark toward the internationally declared deadline to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the road leading to that 2030 destination seems increasingly out of reach, if not out completely out of sight.

We all know the world is well off-track to meet those 17 universally agreed goals. From ending hunger and malnutrition in all their forms, to reversing or at least taming global warming to no more than 1.5 C, to ending poverty and inequality—we, as a human race, are failing. Badly.

And while that failure is universally well-understood, it is understood nowhere more acutely than in some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries. I'm referring to those least developed, or landlocked countries—those with no access to the sea—and the many small island developing states that rely on imports for almost everything, while left to the mercy of increasingly hostile weather events.

Of the many things that need fixing, food and agriculture systems stand out. All of these countries mentioned, must transform their agrifood systems to make them more nutritious, more resilient, more innovative and more sustainable to ensure their people can thrive. This transformation goes hand-in-hand with measures to prevent and mitigate the worst impacts of climate change and severe weather that are a menace to their food security.

But they can't do it on their own. Most simply don't have the capacity, whether that be enough financial resources, a lack of the latest technical know-how or innovations, and critically, lack of access to inward investment.

The vast Asia and Pacific region is home to some of the most populous and innovative countries on the planet—some of the richest too. Yet, the region struggles with persistent hunger and malnutrition hot spots. While many gains were made in the early 2010s, we find ourselves collectively backpedaling to where we were many years ago.

The reasons are complex, but the threat of climate change to islands in the Pacific and low-lying, heavily populated agricultural zones across much of Asia is no longer a theory, the damage caused is real and evidence-based.

Surely the international community must converge to right this

By JONG-JIN KIM

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jong-Jin Kim is the assistant director-general and regional representative (Asia and the Pacific), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.



wrong. It does so when it sees other injustices, both natural and man-made. It raises its collective voice against war and tragedies at sea and elsewhere. It steps forward, united, in determination.

For the sake of the millions of people of the least developed, landlocked and small island developing states of Asia and the Pacific, that global, united determination is needed now more than ever before. Transforming their agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life for all—leaving no one behind—is a goal we can achieve. If we work together, with the right help, these countries can become much more resilient to the threats they face now, and in the days and years to come.

On June 29, more than 50 countries—all of them either least-developed nations, landlocked or small island developing states are gathering in Rome, at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to raise their collective voice. No fewer than 14 member-nations and territories from the Asia and Pacific region are participating, and most are sending their highest-level government ministers.

The objectives of this gathering are achievable.

They intend to: 1) identify and support the uptake of innovative practices, methodologies, tools and technologies to support SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs to adapt and/or mitigate climate change; 2) to harness collective wisdom and exchange experiences and good practices developed by SIDS and L/LDCs to make development both climate and disaster resilient; 3) to discuss challenges and solutions to bridge the gap in investment required by vulnerable countries to accelerate the achievement of food security and nutrition related SDG targets and, finally, 4) to strengthen cooperation between/among vulnerable Members and the international development community for the balanced integration of the SDG targets in national development strategies and matching financing.

Yes, it's talk. But talk can lead to action—and action is what's needed now, more than ever before. The year 2030 is closer than many think and it's time to take a stand.



**EDITORIAL POLICY**

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

# How the end of Roe turned into a threat to American democracy

By MARY ZIEGLER AND REVA SIEGEL  
LOS ANGELES TIMES

A year ago, when the Supreme Court decided *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. proclaimed the death of abortion rights to be a victory for American democracy, one that might de-escalate political conflict. A month ahead of the *Dobbs* anniversary, Washington Post columnist George Will celebrated the court for restoring "abortion politics to the status of a state's choice"—a move, Will argued, that has led to a "partial healing of the nation's civic culture."

But the idea that *Dobbs* is leading to any kind of healing ignores the reality on the ground in states, hospitals and courtrooms across the United States. Stories abound of people denied medical care and abortion bans threatening women's lives. When Oklahoma's Supreme Court required meaningful exceptions to the state's bans, the court explained—in chilling detail—how close to death the Legislature could push a pregnant woman under the state's constitution.

So far, the dominant response to *Dobbs* has been resistance, not healing.

Polls find that a majority of Americans oppose the *Dobbs* decision and that, not surprisingly, opposition to abortion bans has increased, in particular in places that already have them on the books. A June survey by Mississippi Today and Siena College shows that even among Mississippi's Republican primary voters, a narrow majority supports repealing the state's trigger law.

Voters favored abortion rights in all six of the ballot initiatives that have directly addressed the issue. Democrats fared far better than expected in what was supposed to be a red wave midterm election in 2022, partly thanks to the abortion issue and to the mobilization of younger, often female voters.

On closer examination, *Dobbs* never really embraced democracy in the first place, and especially not a robust, modern concept of democracy that guarantees equality and key liberties.

The court set aside a right that most Americans have favored since the 1970s. Worse, the justices tied the Constitution's meaning to an era when women were prohibited from voting or practicing law, and when the Comstock Act, a 19th century anti-vice law, was interpreted to prohibit the mailing of abortion or contraceptive drugs or devices, and to criminalize public discussion of controlling reproduction. The court's holding that laws banning abortion in 1868 must define the nation's history and tradition of liberty was a fig leaf for giving conservatives what they want.

Developments since *Dobbs* seem to support this understanding of the conservative agenda. There is little sign that the opponents of reproductive rights will accept the results of popular politics. In the year since *Dobbs*, we have seen legislative efforts to make it harder for citizens to put a question on the ballot—with some legislators acknowledging publicly or privately that their objective was to prevent voters from protecting abortion access. Notwithstanding the court's suggestion that post-*Dobbs*, federal judges would be out of the abortion business, we've seen litigation designed to let federal judges override the Food and Drug Administration and eliminate access to mifepristone, used for medical abortions, nationwide.

But the most revealing symbol of the post-*Dobbs* era is the revival of the 19th century interpretation of the Comstock Act, which is central to the case challenging the FDA's approval of mifepristone. In the 20th century, courts rejected a sweeping interpretation of the act and held that it prohibited the mailing of birth control or abortion drugs and devices only if intended for unlawful uses. Antiabortion attorneys general, judges and activists want to return to the earlier reading because it could help deliver what vot-

ers never would: a nationwide ban on abortion with no exceptions.

The Comstock Act has expressive as well as instrumental appeal for the antiabortion movement, especially abortion abolitionists. Its archaic interpretation reflected a particular idea of "sexual purity" that condemned women for separating sex and reproduction and for controlling the timing of motherhood. Today, the abolitionist movement supports draconian criminal penalties for women who have the procedure, even including the death penalty, and it doesn't allow exceptions to abortion bans.

To date, abortion abolitionists have failed to capture control of the most powerful antiabortion groups, but the revived Comstock Act is compelling to a much larger group of abortion opponents—and not just for strategic reasons. It is not accidental the *Dobbs* decision was built on laws enacted in an era when women had few rights and little power to change the law. A 2022 national survey showed that those opposed to abortion tend to have a traditional understanding of gender roles and that stereotypical beliefs about women in general and women who have had abortions in particular are strong predictors of opposition to abortion—stronger even than party identification, gender or religiosity.

Through its reimagined version of the Comstock Act, the right wing seeks to enforce a traditional view of women and their roles, sexual purity and societal control over reproduction, a view that limits what people can say and think, as well as what they can do. In the era of "Don't Say Gay" mandates and book bans, its reemergence tells us a great deal about what kind of democracy some of *Dobbs*' proponents have in mind for the years to come.

*Mary Ziegler is a law professor at UC Davis and the author of Roe: The History of a National Obsession. Reva Siegel is a law professor at Yale University and the author of the Texas Law Review article Memory Games: Dobbs's Originalism as Anti-Democratic Living Constitutionalism—and Some Pathways for Resistance.*

## DACA recipients are under attack once again

As I read the headlines surrounding the still uncertain future of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, even as we reached its 11th anniversary on June 15, I cannot help but reflect on the privilege that many of us hold as U.S. citizens.

This is highlighted, for example, in the story of Jaime Avalos, a young man who was stranded in Mexico for six months due to an error in his immigration paperwork. Unlike Avalos, I can choose to read these headlines (or not) with confidence that regardless of what is said, my life and home will very likely remain the same. My U.S. citizenship affords me that certainty.

But for many DACA recipients, their status is increasingly tenuous. An October 2022 court ruling placed more than 600,000 undocumented youth who are protected by DACA in danger of losing the only home they have known. By ruling that DACA was unlawful, the court threw those enrolled in it into a deeper state of fear.

DACA was established in 2012 during the Obama administration as a means of offering work and educational opportunities—and a reprieve from deportation—to young people who entered the United States as children. On average, most DACA recipients entered the country at age 7. Since its inception, DACA recipients have faced countless hurdles, such as in 2017 when the Trump administration decided to rescind the program.

In January of this year, nine states appealed to a federal judge in Texas to end the DACA program with a decision pending on the legality of the program. The only things that remain certain now are the hope, tirelessness and perseverance from youth across the country who continue to wait for their future to be decided. One source of relief came on Feb. 10 with the reintroduction of a bipartisan Dream Act, which would offer a pathway to citizenship, but the ultimate outcome remains to be seen.

As a child and adolescent psychologist, I wonder what this chronic state of uncertainty will mean for the long-term mental health of undocumented youth who are protected by DACA. The short answer is that it is unlikely to mean anything positive. Narratives from unauthorized youth depict common challenges, dreams and the disorienting experience of remaining invisible. In 2020, United We Dream, the largest immigrant youth-led network in the United States, partnered with the Latinx Immigrant Health Alliance to sur-

vey more than 650 unauthorized youth and adults; 68% of those surveyed had DACA status. The report revealed high levels of stress and clinically significant levels of depression and anxiety.

As someone living in the United States, I can't help but consider the impact of lost jobs and economic contributions on the economy if DACA is rescinded. DACA households contribute an estimated \$6.2 billion in federal taxes and \$3.3 billion in state and local taxes each. If these workers are forced to leave, the United States is projected to lose roughly 22,000 jobs per month for the next two years.

As a human being, I feel compelled to act and speak out. Undocumented youth who are protected by DACA should have a familiar and safe place to call home. While immigration is undeniably polarizing, we can all identify with the universal feelings of angst and excitement that come with young adulthood. It's a time for figuring out who we are, what we like and where we fit in. DACA recipients are like the teenagers we were—except that they're living with the perpetual threat of being uprooted.

### SAD

From page 8

Questions remain about the level of danger surrounding this tourist expedition, the payoff of which appeared to be little more than the chance to gawk at a watery graveyard through a shared porthole, along with who should pay the enormous costs of the search and rescue effort.

As privately funded and operated trips into space and into the ocean's depths proliferate, there's a need to debate certification procedures, especially when those journeys are destined for places yet to be explored. Clearly, there are rich folks who feel like they have bought everything they can buy on terra firma, and who crave the sensation of risk and danger. Predictably, entrepreneurial outfits have emerged to serve them.

We respect the spirit of the adventurer. But paying for a costly, dangerous ride is not the same thing as genuine exploration, even if those tourists convince themselves otherwise. Perhaps some of our fellow humans need saving from their own desires.

By MICHELLE ALEJANDRA SILVA  
Progressive Perspectives



*Michelle Alejandra Silva is an associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry, Yale School of Medicine, and a Public Voices fellow of the OpEd Project and Yale University.*

Inaction should no longer be an option. I choose to believe that good outcomes are still possible, but hard work and determination are not always enough to finish the job. Empathy and a willingness to truly see and respect the "other's" humanity are also needed.

To close his State of the Union speech in February, President Joe Biden expressed his optimism for the future of America: "We just have to remember who we are. We are the United States of America and there is nothing, nothing beyond our capacity if we do it together."

Nonetheless, had that been your loved one lost in the Atlantic Ocean, you surely would hope for the kind of rescue effort that took place over the last several days. Many people have been educated over the role of the Coast Guard, an agency that does not always get the attention it deserves. In these kinds of situations, it is the Coast Guard that takes the lead, and the Navy that provides backup.

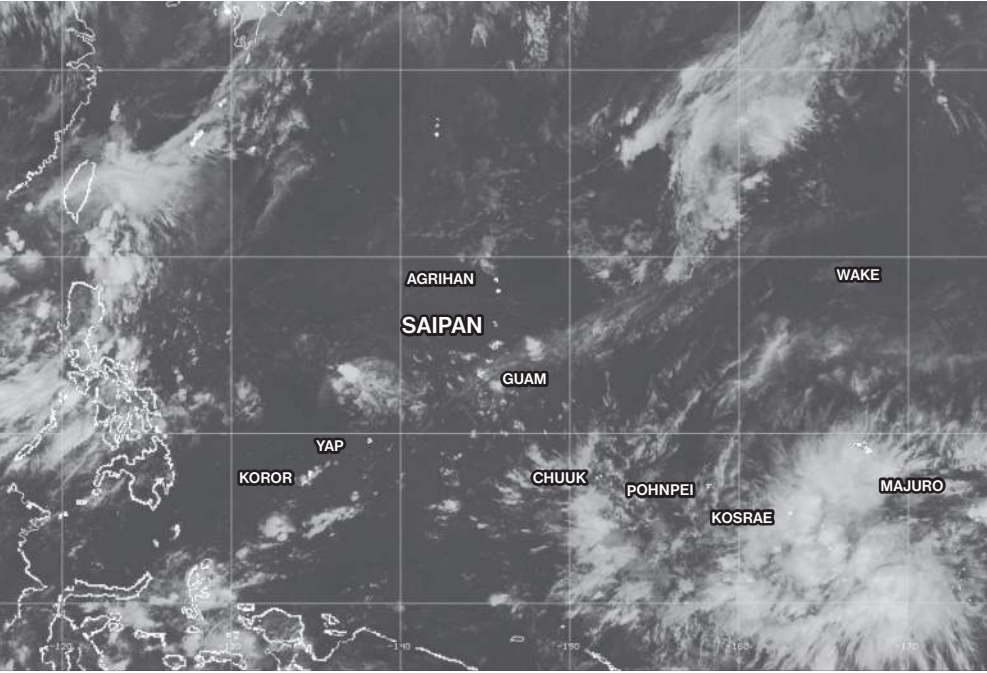
But the most heartening thing here was, with only minor exceptions, the absence of bureaucratic squabbling and the determination to try to save lives while holding back questions for later. This was an example of what governments do best. They moved like lightning, given the circumstances, ably supported by a private sector that had the needed technology.

Everyone wishes an outcome that did not add more deaths to the legacy of Titanic. That said, there were brave human rescuers then, and there are those rescuers now. We can be thankful for their service.



# The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
Isolated showers. Partly sunny		Mostly sunny		Partly sunny		A chance of showers. Partly sunny		A chance of showers. Partly sunny	
86°	80°	85°	79°	85°	79°	85°	79°	85°	80°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



**PICTURE TIME: 6:11 AM, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2023**  
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and radar indicating mainly partly cloudy skies and isolated showers this morning. Ipan buoy and latest altimetry data are indicating seas of 4 to 5 feet comprised mostly of an easterly trade swell.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Scattered Thunderstorms	88° / 81°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	83° / 78°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Scattered Thunderstorms	86° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Scattered Thunderstorms	87° / 77°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 81°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:49 AM	6:50 PM
Friday	5:50 AM	6:51 PM
Saturday	5:50 AM	6:51 PM
Sunday	5:50 AM	6:51 PM
Monday	5:50 AM	6:51 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	1:41 AM	2:39 PM
Friday	-	2:23 AM	3:36 PM
Saturday	-	3:10 AM	4:37 PM
Sunday	-	4:04 AM	5:43 PM
Monday	-	5:05 AM	6:49 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Showers	58° / 48°	
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	99° / 71°	
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	87° / 82°	
Honolulu	Sunny	86° / 75°	
London	Rain	63° / 53°	
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	75° / 59°	
Manila	Thunderstorms	87° / 79°	
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	54° / 50°	
Miami	Mostly Sunny	87° / 79°	
New York	Thunderstorms	76° / 68°	
Osaka	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°	
Paris	Thunderstorms	83° / 60°	
Busan	Thunderstorms/Wind	77° / 72°	
Rome	Showers	87° / 68°	
Salem	Mostly Sunny	94° / 70°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	64° / 54°	
Seoul	Thunderstorms	77° / 71°	
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	88° / 76°	
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	83° / 63°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
3:09 AM	High Tide	2.02	
10:30 AM	Low Tide	0.40	
5:22 PM	High Tide	1.68	
10:03 PM	Low Tide	1.29	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2023							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA156	6:55PM	7:40PM	1, 4 effective June 5	UA112	5:00PM	5:50PM	1, 4 effective June 5
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA189	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily	PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
				UA192	11:50PM	5:35AM+1	2, 5
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7 via ICN	UA184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam	UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily	7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily	OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily	7C3405	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.							
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022							
SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily	3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/ Sat/Sun
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/ Sat/Sun	3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily	3103	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily	2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily	2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily	2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily	2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily	2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

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# Business

## GRMC partners with UOG in replacing damaged furniture at St. Dominic's

**DEDEDO, Guam**—Guam Regional Medical City recently partnered up with the University of Guam to procure replacement furniture for St. Dominic's Senior Care Home in Barrigada Heights. The devastation of Typhoon Mawar left the senior home deficient in supplies and with several damages to the facilities and patients' properties, including furniture.

GRMC staff—Patient educator Angelika Beyond and Social Services manager Tasi Taitano—discovered that UOG was giving away dormitory furniture that sustained minor water damage and forwarded this information to St. Dominic's acting administrator Kate Keisling, who later contacted UOG Residence Halls director Mark Mendiola. After some correspondence with Keisling and Mendiola, GRMC chief nursing officer Jennifer R. Cruz coordinated with GRMC warehouse staff to help transport the furniture from UOG to St. Dominic's, which prompted several trips.

"GRMC is more than happy to assist in any way we can

to our manāmkō at St. Dominic's. It's unfortunate that their facilities and their supplies were heavily impacted by the typhoon, so it's imperative that we lend a hand to our community partners in need, especially through challenging times like this," said Cruz.

Keisling shared, "Jennifer Cruz and the team at GRMC have been the greatest source of support for St. Dominic's Senior Care Home during and post-Typhoon Mawar. She's advocated to refill our reserve tank to keep our resident stable, provided resources for crisis management, and donated supplies. Jen Cruz was incredibly gracious in coordinating with Mark Mendiola from UOG to donate dorm furniture to replace what was damaged during Typhoon Mawar, even lending GRMC's box truck and warehouse crew to get the wardrobes to St. Dominic's. We are immeasurably blessed, humbled, and grateful for all the ways GRMC supports St. Dominic's in caring for Guam's manāmkō."

St. Dominic's Senior Care Home continues to accept do-



KATE KEISLING

The Guam Regional Medical City Warehouse team loads up furniture from University of Guam dorms.

nations from the community. According to Keisling, the patients' current needs include: 3-in-1 shampoo/conditioner/bodywash, liquid body wash, isopropyl alcohol, Cavilon lotion, and electric shavers. Hygiene donations and non-perishable items can be left at the front. For perishable items, please contact St. Dominic's at (671) 632-9370. (PR)

## Traveling over July 4 weekend, be ready for flight delays

By **DAVID KOENIG**  
AP AIRLINES WRITER

Travelers waited out widespread delays at U.S. airports on Tuesday, an ominous sign heading into the long July 4 holiday weekend, which is shaping up as the biggest test yet for airlines that are struggling to keep up with surging numbers of passengers.

In some cases, delays ran several hours at airports in the Northeast, as thunderstorms pounded the region.

At various times, the Federal Aviation Administration held up flights bound for LaGuardia Airport in New York and Reagan Washington National and Baltimore-Washington airports near the nation's capital.

By evening on the East Coast, about 6,500 flights had been delayed and about 1,900 canceled. United Airlines, with a major hub in Newark, New Jersey, canceled about 500 flights or 18% of its schedule, and JetBlue canceled 16% of its flights, according to FlightAware.

Call it the storm before the storm.

The FAA was expecting about 48,000 flights on Tuesday, rising on Wednesday and peaking at more than 52,500 on Thursday, which figures to be the biggest travel day of the holiday period.

People whose travel plans

were disrupted took to social media to vent against the airlines. Some swore they would never fly again on whichever airline had done them wrong.

When their United flight in Newark was canceled Sunday night, Margo and Jason Osborne searched for other flights but couldn't find one. Margo said a United agent wouldn't let them retrieve their bags either — they would have to pick those up at their final destination, New Orleans — then "made me feel like an idiot" for leaving needed medical supplies in a checked bag. They saw other people looking for unaccompanied minors and heard about stranded travelers who spent hours in line or slept at the airport.

"All these poor people are literally just sitting there at the mercy of a company who is not doing anything to help them," Margo said in an interview. "There is zero customer service right now."

The Osbornes rented a car — they felt lucky to snag one — and drove 10 hours through the night to Charlotte, North Carolina, to catch an American Airlines flight to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, close to home. Their luggage finally got to New Orleans on Tuesday.

If large numbers of passengers are stranded or delayed this weekend, expect

federal officials and the airlines to blame each other for the mess.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, whose department includes the FAA, has been beating up on the airlines for more than a year. He has accused them of failing to live up to reasonable standards of customer service and suggested that they are scheduling more flights than they can handle.

The airlines are punching back.

United Airlines CEO Scott Kirby blamed a shortage of federal air traffic controllers for massive disruptions last weekend at its Newark hub.

"We estimate that over 150,000 customers on United alone were impacted this weekend because of FAA staffing issues and their ability to manage traffic," Kirby wrote in a memo to employees Tuesday night.

United could be contributing to its struggles. The Association of Flight Attendants, which represents the airline's cabin crews, said it complained about wait times of more than three hours for workers who called a crew scheduling center that had "limited telephone lines and personnel." The union told flight attendants near the end of their shifts to tell supervisors and find a hotel room.



KATE KEISLING

St. Dominic's acting administrator Kate Keisling takes a selfie with University of Guam's Mark Mendiola and the Guam Regional Medical City Warehouse team.

## More than \$200B in COVID-19 aid may have been stolen

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—More than \$200 billion may have been stolen from two large COVID-19 relief initiatives, according to new estimates from a federal watchdog investigating federally funded programs that helped small businesses survive the worst public health crisis in more than a hundred years.

The numbers issued Tuesday by the U.S. Small Business Administration inspector general are much greater than the office's previous projections and underscore how vulnerable the Paycheck Protection and COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loan programs were to fraudsters, particularly during the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic.

The inspector general's report said "at least 17 percent of all COVID-EIDL and PPP

funds were disbursed to potentially fraudulent actors." The fraud estimate for the COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loan program is more than \$136 billion, which represents 33 percent of the total money spent on that program, according to the report. The Paycheck Protection fraud estimate is \$64 billion, the inspector general said.

In comments attached to the report, a senior SBA official disputed the new numbers. Bailey DeVries, SBA's acting associate administrator for capital access, said the inspector general's "approach contains serious flaws that significantly overestimate fraud and unintentionally mislead the public to believe that the work we did together had no significant impact in protecting against fraud."

The SBA inspector gen-

eral had previously estimated fraud in the COVID-19 disaster loan program at \$86 billion and the Paycheck Protection program at \$20 billion.

The Associated Press reported June 13 that scammers and swindlers potentially swiped about \$280 billion in COVID-19 emergency aid; an additional \$123 billion was wasted or misspent. The bulk of the potential losses are from the two SBA programs and another to provide unemployment benefits to workers suddenly unemployed by the economic upheaval caused by the pandemic. The three initiatives were begun during the Trump administration and inherited by President Joe Biden. Combined, the loss estimated by AP represents 10% of the \$4.2 trillion the U.S. government has so far disbursed in COVID relief aid.



# Nation

## Canadian wildfires causing worst air in US cities like Detroit, Chicago

**CHICAGO** (AP)—Drifting smoke from the ongoing wildfires across Canada is creating curtains of haze and raising air quality concerns throughout the Great Lakes region and in parts of the central and eastern United States.

The Environmental Protection Agency's AirNow.gov site showed parts of Illinois, lower Michigan and southern Wisconsin had the worst air quality in the U.S. on Tuesday afternoon, and Chicago, Detroit and Milwaukee had air quality categorized as "very unhealthy."

In Minnesota, a record 23rd air quality alert was issued Tuesday through late Wednesday night across much of the state, as smoky skies obscure the skylines of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy issued an air quality alert for the entire state. Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources also issued an air quality advisory for the state.

In Chicago, officials urged young people, older adults and residents with health issues to spend more time indoors.

"Just driving into the zoo ... you could just see around the buildings, kind of just haze," said Shelly Woinowski, who was visiting the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago.

Some day care centers in the Chicago area have told parents that their children will



A person walks along the shore of Lake Michigan as the downtown skyline is blanketed in haze from Canadian wildfires Tuesday, June 27, 2023, in Chicago. AP

remain indoors Tuesday due to the poor air quality, while one youth sports club says it adjusted its activities to add more time indoors.

"As these unsafe conditions continue, the city will continue to provide updates and take swift action to ensure that vulnerable individuals have the resources they need to protect themselves and their fami-

lies," Mayor Brandon Johnson said in a release.

In the Milwaukee area, Flight for Life Wisconsin was unable to respond to a motorcycle-van crash because the Federal Aviation Administration requires 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) visibility, and the visibility was reduced to three-quarters to 1.5 miles (1.2-2.4 kilometers) because

of the hazy skies, Executive Director Leif Erickson said.

Fires in northern Quebec and low pressure over the eastern Great Lakes are sending smoke through northern Michigan, and across southern Wisconsin and Chicago, said Bryan Jack-

son, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

Jackson added that a north wind would push the smoke further south, moving into Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky later Tuesday and overnight.

The Canadian Interagency

Forest Fire Centre reported Monday that 76,129 square kilometers (29,393 square miles) of land including forests has burned across Canada since Jan. 1. That exceeds the previous record set in 1989 of 75,596 square kilometers (29,187 square miles), according to the National Forestry Database.

Nationally, there are currently 490 fires burning, with 255 of them considered to be out of control.

Even recent rainfall in Quebec likely won't be enough to extinguish the wildfires ravaging the northern part of that province, but the wet weather could give firefighters a chance to get ahead of the flames, officials said Tuesday.

Nearly a quarter of the fires burning in Canada are in Quebec. Environment Canada meteorologist Simon Legault said he expects rain to stop falling by Wednesday morning in the regions most affected by forest fires.

Earlier this month, massive fires burning stretches of Canadian forests blanketed the northeastern United States and the Great Lakes region, turning the air yellowish gray, and prompting warnings for people to stay inside and keep windows closed.

## Supreme Court rejects novel legislative theory

By **NICHOLAS RICCARDI** and **DAVID A. LIEB**  
Associated Press

The U.S. Supreme Court shot down a controversial legal theory that could have changed the way elections are run across the country, but left the door open to more limited challenges that could increase its role in deciding voting disputes during the 2024 presidential election.

The court's 6-3 ruling Tuesday drove a stake through the most extreme version of the so-called independent state legislature theory, which holds that legislatures have absolute power in setting the rules of federal elections and cannot be second-guessed by state courts. That decision cheered voting rights groups.

"We beat back the most serious legal threat our democracy has ever faced today," said Kathay Feng of Common Cause, whose lawsuit challenging congressional districts

drawn by North Carolina's Republican-controlled legislature triggered the case.

But for some critics of the theory, the danger is not entirely past.

The court found that state courts still must act within "ordinary bounds" when reviewing laws governing federal elections. That gives another set of tools for those who lose election lawsuits in state courts to try to persuade federal judges to overturn those rulings.

"They've rejected a lot of the extreme stuff, but there is still a lot of room for ideological and partisan judging to come into play," said Rick Hasen, a law professor at the University of California Los Angeles who filed an amicus brief in the case urging the court to reject the theory across the board.

Conservatives who had advocated for limits on the role of state courts in federal

elections agreed with Hasen that the court didn't settle the question of when, precisely, state courts need to stay out of federal elections. The issue may only get resolved in a last-minute challenge during the presidential election, they warned.

"Unfortunately, it's going to be 2024 on the emergency docket," said Jason Torchinsky, a Republican attorney who filed an amicus brief urging the court to adopt a more limited version of the theory.

The high court this week will decide whether to hear another case that touches on similar issues, an appeal by Ohio Republican lawmakers of a pair of state supreme court rulings directing them to draw fair congressional maps. The issue could come up in other cases where a state supreme court overturns congressional maps, such as in Wisconsin, where Democrats hope a new liberal majority on that state supreme court will reverse what they claim is a Republican gerrymander there.

### ACROSS THE NATION

#### Rudy Giuliani interviewed in Jan. 6 investigation

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Rudy Giuliani, who as a member of Donald Trump's legal team sought to overturn 2020 presidential election results in battleground states, was interviewed recently by investigators with the Justice Department special counsel's office. A spokesman for Giuliani confirmed he met with the special counsel. "The appearance was entirely voluntary and conducted in a professional manner," Ted Goodman said in a statement. A person familiar with the matter said the interview was not done before a grand jury. The person, who insisted on anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation, would not say what questions investigators asked. The interview is an additional sign of busy investigative activity by special counsel Jack Smith as his team of prosecutors scrutinizes efforts by Trump and his allies to undo the results of the election in the weeks before the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the Capitol. Smith filed a separate case earlier this month charging Trump with illegal-

ly retaining classified documents at his Florida home, Mar-a-Lago. As a lawyer for Trump, Giuliani pushed bogus legal challenges to the presidential election results. The legal team filed lawsuits in battleground states raising unsupported claims of vast election fraud even though officials, including Trump's own attorney general, William Barr, said no such pervasive problems existed.

#### Thousands of unauthorized vapes pouring into US

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—The number of different electronic cigarette devices sold in the U.S. has nearly tripled to over 9,000 since 2020, driven almost entirely by a wave of unauthorized disposable vapes from China, according to tightly controlled sales data obtained by The Associated Press. The surge stands in stark contrast to regulators' own figures, which tout the rejection of some 99% of company requests to sell new e-cigarettes while authorizing only a few meant for adult smokers. The numbers demonstrate the Food and

Drug Administration's inability to control the tumultuous vaping market more than three years after declaring a crackdown on kid-friendly flavors. Most of the disposable e-cigarettes, which are thrown away after they're used up, come in sweet and fruity flavors like pink lemonade, gummy bear and watermelon that have made them the favorite tobacco product among teenagers. They are all technically illegal, but their influx has turned the FDA's regulatory model on its head. Instead of carefully reviewing individual products that might help adult smokers, regulators must now somehow claw back thousands of illegal products sold by under-the-radar importers and distributors. Most disposables mirror a few major brands, such as Elf Bar or Puff Bar, but hundreds of new varieties appear each month. Companies copy each other's designs, blurring the line between the real and counterfeit. Entrepreneurs can launch a new product by simply sending their logo and flavor requests to Chinese manufacturers, who promise to deliver tens of thousands of devices within weeks.



# Asia

## S. Korea has lowest fertility rate in world

Around the world, nations are looking at the prospect of shrinking, aging populations—but none more so than South Korea.

Over the last 60 years, South Korea has undergone the most rapid fertility decline in recorded human history. In 1960, the nation's total fertility rate — the number of children, on average, that a woman has during her reproductive years — stood at just under six children per woman. In 2022, that figure was 0.78. South Korea is the only country in the world to register a fertility rate of less than one child per woman, although others — Ukraine, China and Spain — are close.

As a demographer who over the past four decades has conducted extensive research on Asian populations, I know that this prolonged and steep decline will have huge impacts on South Korea. It may slow down economic growth, contributing to a shift that will see the country end up less rich and with a smaller population.

### Older, poorer, more dependent

Countries need a total fertility rate of 2.1 children per woman to replace their population, when the effects of immigration and emigration aren't considered. And South Korea's fertility rate has been consistently below that number since 1984, when it dropped to 1.93, from 2.17 the year before.

What makes the South Korean fertility rate decline more astonishing is the relatively short period in which it has occurred.

Back in 1800, the U.S. total fertility rate was well over 6.0. But it took the U.S. around 170 years to consistently drop

below the replacement level. Moreover, in the little over 60 years in which South Korea's fertility rate fell from 6.0 to 0.8, the U.S. saw a more gradual decline from 3.0 to 1.7.

Fertility decline can have a positive effect in certain circumstances, via something demographers refer to as "the demographic dividend." This dividend refers to accelerated increases in a country's economy that follow a decline in birth rates and subsequent changes in its age composition that result in more working-age people and fewer dependent young children and elderly people.

And that is what happened in South Korea — a decline in fertility helped convert South Korea from a very poor country to a very rich one.

### Behind the economic miracle

South Korea's fertility decline began in the early 1960s when the government adopted an economic planning program and a population and family planning program.

By that time, South Korea was languishing, having seen its economy and society destroyed by the Korean War of 1950 to 1953. Indeed by the late-1950s, South Korea was one of the poorest countries in the world. In 1961, its annual per capita income was only about US\$82.

But dramatic increases in economic growth began in 1962, when the South Korean government introduced a five-year economic development plan.

Crucially, the government also introduced a population planning program in a bid to bring down the nation's fertility rate. This included a goal of getting 45% of married couples to use contraception

— until then, very few Koreans used contraception.

This further contributed to the fertility reduction, as many couples realized that having fewer children would often lead to improvements in family living standards.

Both the economic and family planning programs were instrumental in moving South Korea from one with a high fertility rate to one with a low fertility rate.

As a result, the country's dependent population — the young and the elderly — grew smaller in relation to its working-age population.

The demographic change kick-started economic growth that continued well into the mid-1990s. Increases in productivity, combined with an increasing labor force and a gradual reduction of unemployment, produced average annual growth rates in gross domestic product of between 6% and 10% for many years.

South Korea today is one of the richest countries in the world with a per capita income of \$35,000.

### Losing people every year

Much of this transformation of South Korea from a poor country to a rich country has been due to the demographic dividend realized during the country's fertility decline. But the demographic dividend only works in the short term. Long-term fertility declines are often disastrous for a nation's economy.

With an extremely low fertility rate of 0.78, South Korea is losing population each year and experiencing more deaths than births. The once-vibrant nation is on the way to becoming a country with lots of elderly people and fewer workers. *(The Conversation)*

## 2,700 people tricked into working for cybercrime syndicates rescued in PH

**MANILA, Philippines (AP)**—Philippine police backed by commandos staged a massive raid on Tuesday and said they rescued more than 2,700 workers from China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia and more than a dozen other countries who were allegedly swindled into working for fraudulent online gaming sites and other cybercrime groups.

The number of human trafficking victims rescued from seven buildings in Las Pinas

city in metropolitan Manila and the scale of the nighttime police raid were the largest so far this year and indicated how the Philippines has become a key base of operations for cybercrime syndicates.

Cybercrime scams have become a major issue in Asia with reports of people from the region and beyond being lured into taking jobs in countries like strife-torn Myanmar and Cambodia. However, many of these workers find

themselves trapped in virtual slavery and forced to participate in scams targeting people over the internet.

In May, leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations agreed in a summit in Indonesia to tighten border controls and law enforcement and broaden public education to fight criminal syndicates that traffic workers to other nations, where they are made to participate in online fraud.

# World

## Prigozhin now in Belarus, Russia won't press charges for mutiny

Yevgeny Prigozhin, owner of the private army of prison recruits and other mercenaries who have fought some of the deadliest battles in Russia's invasion of Ukraine, escaped prosecution for his abortive armed rebellion against the Kremlin and arrived Tuesday in Belarus.

The exile of the 62-year-old owner of the Wagner Group was part of a deal that ended the short-lived mutiny in Russia. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko confirmed Prigozhin was in Belarus, and said he and some of his troops were welcome to stay "for some time" at their own expense.

Prigozhin has not been seen since Saturday, when he waved to well-wishers from a vehicle in the southern city of Rostov. He issued a defiant audio statement on Monday. And on Tuesday morning, a private jet believed to belong to him flew from Rostov to an airbase southwest of the Belarusian capital of Minsk, according to data from FlightRadar24.

Meanwhile, Moscow said preparations were underway for Wagner's troops fighting in Ukraine, who numbered 25,000 according to Prigozhin, to hand over their heavy weapons to Russia's mili-



AP  
In this handout photo taken from video released by Prigozhin Press Service, Yevgeny Prigozhin, the owner of the Wagner Group military company, records his video addresses in Rostov-on-Don, Russia, Saturday, June 24, 2023.

tary. Prigozhin had said such moves were planned ahead of a July 1 deadline for his fighters to sign contracts — which he opposed — to serve under Russia's military command.

Russian authorities also said Tuesday they have closed a criminal investigation into the uprising and are pressing no armed rebellion charge against Prigozhin or his followers.

Still, Russian President Vladimir Putin appeared to set the stage for financial wrongdoing charges against an affiliated organization Prigozhin owns. Putin told a military gathering that Prigozhin's Concord Group earned 80 billion rubles (\$941 million) from a contract to pro-

vide the military with food, and that Wagner had received over 86 billion rubles (over \$1 billion) in the past year for wages and additional items.

"I hope that while doing so they didn't steal anything, or stole not so much," Putin said, adding that authorities would look closely at Concord's contract.

For years, Prigozhin has enjoyed lucrative catering contracts with the Russian government. Police who searched his St. Petersburg office on Saturday said they found 4 billion rubles (\$48 million) in trucks outside, according to media reports the Wagner boss confirmed. He said the money was intended to pay soldiers' families. *(AP)*

## Recruitment of children by armed groups in Syria on rise

**QAMISHLI, Syria (AP)**—A 13-year-old Kurdish girl went missing on her way home from a school exam last month, after being approached by a man from an armed group. Her parents immediately feared the worst — that she had been persuaded to join the group and was taken to one of its training camps.

The girl, Peyal Aqil, was with friends when she encountered the man who turned out to be a recruiter for a group known as the Revolutionary Youth. She followed him to one of the group's centers in the city of Qamishli in northeast Syria. Her friends waited for her outside, but she never emerged.

Peyal's mother, Hamrin Alouji, said she and her husband complained to local authorities, to no avail.

The group later said Peyal joined willingly, a claim rejected by Alouji. "We consider that at this age, she cannot give consent, even if she was convinced" by the group's

program, Alouji said, sitting for an interview in her daughter's room, filled with stuffed animals and school texts.

Armed groups have recruited children throughout the past 12 years of conflict and civil war in Syria. A new United Nations report on recruitment, released Tuesday, says the use of child soldiers in Syria is growing, even as fighting in most parts of Syria is winding down.

The number of children recruited by armed groups in Syria has risen steadily over the past three years — from 813 in 2020 to 1,296 in 2021 and 1,696 in 2022, the U.N. says.

Among those allegedly recruiting children is a U.S. ally in the battle against Islamic State extremists — the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, according to the U.N. In 2022, the U.N. attributed half the cases, or 637, to the SDF and associated groups in northeast Syria.

The report also said the U.N. had confirmed 611

recruitment cases by the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army, which has clashed with the SDF in the past, and 383 by the al-Qaida-linked Hayat Tahrir al Sham in northwest Syria. The report cited 25 cases of child recruitment by Syrian government forces and pro-government militias.

Children are being recruited across Syria, said Bassam Alahmad, executive director of Syrians for Truth and Justice, an independent civil society organization.

In some cases, children are forcibly conscripted, he said. In others, minors sign up because they or their families need the salary. Some join for ideological reasons, or because of family and tribal loyalties. In some cases, children are sent out of Syria to fight as mercenaries in other conflicts.

Attempts to end such recruitment have been complicated by the patchwork of armed groups operating in each part of Syria.



# Environment

## EU faces a cliffhanger climate vote after deadlock on key nature bill

**BRUSSELS (AP)**—The European Union is facing a cliffhanger vote next month that will test its global climate and environmental credentials, after its parliament was again deadlocked on pushing a nature restoration bill onwards on Tuesday.

The legislature's environment committee emerged deadlocked at 44-44 on the plan to beef up the restoration of nature in the 27-nation bloc that was damaged during decades of industrial expansion. It means the full parliament will be asked to reject it.

"The fight is not over. We will do our utmost to rally forces throughout the hemisphere behind an ambitious law to the benefit of people and the planet," said socialist S&D legislator Mohamed Chahim.

The parliament's biggest group, the Christian Democrat EPP, has turned against the plan, arguing it is bad for



A steel mill of Germany's biggest producer thyssenkrupp Steel Europe is under steam in Duisburg, Germany, May 23, 2023.

AP

proposed by the EU's executive commission set binding restoration targets for specific habitats and species, with the aim by 2030 to cover at least 20% of the region's land and sea areas.

The EU's executive commission wants the nature restoration law to be a key part of the system since it is necessary for the overall deal to have the maximum input. Others also say that if the EU fails on the nature restoration law, it will be indicative of an overall fatigue when it comes to climate issues.

The Green Deal includes a wide range of measures, from reducing energy consumption to sharply cutting transportation emissions and reforming the EU's trading system for greenhouse gases.

Last week, the EU governments already backed the plan but if the parliament rejects it at its June 10-13 plenary session, the bill would have to be fully reworked, and in essence, diluted at a time when scientists and international institutions like the United Nations call for extra efforts, not fewer.

## Oil spill from Shell pipeline fouls farms and a river in Nigeria

**ABUJA, Nigeria (AP)**—A new oil spill at a Shell facility in Nigeria has contaminated farmland and a river, upending livelihoods in the fishing and farming communities in part of the Niger Delta, which has long endured environmental pollution caused by the oil industry.

The National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency, or NOSDRA, told The Associated Press that the spill came from the Trans-Niger Pipeline operated by Shell that crosses through communities in the Eleme area of Ogoniland, a region where the London-based energy giant has faced decadeslong local pushback to its oil exploration.

The volume of oil spilled has not been determined, but activists have published images of polluted farmland, water surfaces blighted by oil sheens and dead fish mired in sticky crude.

While spills are frequent in the region due to vandalism from oil thieves and a lack of maintenance to pipelines, according to the U.N. Environmental Program, activists call this a "major one."

It is "one of the worst in the last 16 years in Ogoniland," said Fyneface Dumnamene, an environmental activist whose nonprofit monitors spills in the Delta region. It began June 11.

"It lasted for over a week, bursts into Okulu River—which adjoins other rivers and ultimately empties into the Atlantic Ocean—and affects several communities and displaces more than 300 fishers," said Dumnamene of the Youths and Environmental Advocacy Centre.

He said tides have sent oil sheens about 10 kilometers (6 miles) further to creeks near the nation's oil business capital, Port Harcourt.

Shell stopped production

in Ogoniland more than 20 years ago amid deadly unrest from residents protesting environmental damage, but the Trans-Niger Pipeline still sends crude from oil fields in other areas through the region's communities to export terminals.

The leak has been contained, but treating the fallout from the spill at farms and the Okulu River, which runs through communities, has stalled, NOSDRA Director General Idris Musa said.

"Response has been delayed," Musa said, blaming protesting residents. "But engagement is going on."

The apparent deadlock stems from mistrust and past grievances in the riverine and oil-abundant Niger Delta region, which is mostly home to minority ethnic groups who accuse the Nigerian government of marginalization.

Africa's largest economy overwhelmingly depends on the Niger Delta's oil resources for its earnings, but pollution from that production has denied residents access to clean water, hurt farming and fishing, and heightened the risk of violence, activists say.

The communities "are very angry because of the destruction of their livelihoods resulting from the obsolescence of Shell's equipment and are concerned the regulator and Shell will blame sabotage by the residents," Dumnamene said.

embattled farmers and puts food security at risk at a time when the war in Ukraine has shown that strategic autonomy on foodstuffs can be essential.

The bill is a key part of the

EU's vaunted European Green Deal that seeks to set the globe's best climate and biodiversity targets and make the bloc the point of reference on all climate issues. The plans

## With record heat and drought-stricken woods, Spain's Catalonia faces dire wildfire conditions

**SOLSONA, Spain (AP)**—Surveying the hills covered with near bone-dry pines stretching to the Pyrenees in the distance, Asier Larrañaga has reason to be on guard.

This part of northeast Spain is, like large swaths of the Mediterranean country, braced for wildfires due to the lethal combination of a prolonged drought, record-high temperatures and increasingly dense woods unable to adapt to a fast-changing climate.

Larrañaga is one of the top fire analysts for the firefighters of Catalonia charged with safeguarding the region's homes and landscapes. While grateful that some desperately needed rain has finally fallen in recent weeks, he is ready for the worst—unless July and August buck Spain's historic trend of being the hottest and driest months of the year.

"If we have a normal summer ... and conditions of low humidity combined with high temperatures, then we will see fires that quickly expand beyond our extinction capacity. And for areas where it has not rained in May and this month, we could see these types of fires as early as next week," Larrañaga told The Associated Press in the rural town of Solsona, some

two hours north of Barcelona.

Spain suffered the biggest losses from wildfires of any European Union country last year amid a record-hot 2022. Four people, including one firefighter, died in blazes that consumed 306,000 hectares. And with Spain sweltering under a record-hot spring, it is again leading the continent in 2023 with 66,000 hectares turned to ashes. Now firefighters like Larrañaga across Spain are preparing for a potential scorcher of a summer.

The fires coincide with Catalonia and a large part of Spain's south bearing the brunt of a drought that started last year and has only recently been somewhat alleviated by rain. The central reservoirs for Catalonia, which provide water for some six million people including Barcelona, are still only at 29% of capacity and water restrictions remain in place.

Climate change is playing a direct role in propagating these fires, experts agree. The increasing temperatures have made the plants that are used to more mild weather vulnerable to both plagues and fire. Spain, like the rest of the Mediterranean, is forecast to heat up faster than the global average. Spain saw fires

that showed the virulence of a summer outbreak break out as early as March. Northern Europe is also battling blazes spurred by drought.

The 52-year-old Larrañaga is a member of Catalonia's GRAF, its elite wildfire fighting unit. Members of the Catalan firefighters are currently helping in Canada as part of a Spanish contingent sent to combat the massive fires that have sent smoke over the United States and as far as Europe.

Larrañaga was in Solsona to oversee a training session by the local fire brigade. Practice included simulating a last-resort protection maneuver used in cases when firefighters are trapped by the flames. They clear an area of vegetation and take refuge in their truck, which is equipped with sprinklers. The firefighters said that they hope it is a maneuver they will never have to use.

The Solsonès county, home to Solsona and its 9,000 residents, does not normally have large fires thanks to storms generated by the Pyrenees. But the downside is that its forests build up vegetation, or "fuel" for potential fires, that become vulnerable to a lightning strike, a spark from farm machinery, or arson.



AP

In this grab taken from video, workers stand by a container to collect oil spill waste, in Ogoniland, Nigeria, June 16, 2023.



# Life & Style

## Hunt intensifies for tourist who carved name in Colosseum

ROME (AP)—Italy's culture and tourism ministers have vowed to find and punish a tourist who was filmed carving his name and that of his apparent girlfriend in the wall of the Colosseum in Rome, a crime that resulted in hefty fines in the past.

The message reading "Ivan+Haley 23" appeared on the Colosseum at a time when Romans already were complaining about hordes of tourists flooding the Eternal City in record numbers this season. A fellow tourist, Ryan Lutz, of Orange, California, filmed the incident and posted the video on YouTube and Reddit.

The video received over 1,500 social media views and was picked up by Italian media. Lutz told The Associated Press on Tuesday he was "dumbfounded" that someone would deface such an important monument.

Culture Minister Gennaro Sangiuliano called the writing carved into the almost



AP  
Visitors take photos of the Ancient Colosseum, in Rome, Tuesday, June 27, 2023.

2,000-year-old Flavian Amphitheater "serious, undignified and a sign of great incivility." He said he hoped the culprits would be found "and punished according to our laws."

Italian news agency ANSA

noted that the incident marked the fourth time this year that such graffiti was reported at the Colosseum. It said whoever was responsible for the latest episode risked \$15,000 in fines and

up to five years in prison.

Tourism Minister Daniela Santanchè said she hoped the tourist would be

sanctioned "so that he understands the gravity of the gesture." Calling for respect for Italy's culture and his-

tory, she vowed: "We cannot allow those who visit our nation to feel free to behave in this way."

Lutz, who is on a two-month backpacking trip through Europe, said he had just finished a guided tour of the Colosseum on Friday when he saw the person "blatantly carving his name" in the Colosseum wall. Lutz told the AP he took out his phone to film the man because he was so shocked at what he was doing.

"And as you see in the video, I kind of approach him and ask him, dumbfounded at this point, 'Are you serious? Are you really serious?'" Lutz recalled. "And all he could do is like smile at me."

## Klimt painting sells for \$108M at Sotheby auction

LONDON (AP)—A late-life masterpiece by Austrian artist Gustav Klimt sold Tuesday for 85.3 million pounds (\$108.4 million), making it the most expensive artwork ever auctioned in Europe.

"Dame mit Fächer"—Lady with a Fan—sold to a buyer in the room at Sotheby's in London after a 10-minute bidding war for a hammer price of 74 million pounds (\$94.35 million). The higher final figure includes a charge on top of the sale price known as the

buyer's premium.

The sale price well exceeded the presale estimate of 65 million pounds, or \$80 million.

It also beat the previous European auction record of \$104.3 million—65 million pounds at the time—including buyer's premium paid for Alberto Giacometti's sculpture "Walking Man I" at Sotheby's in 2010. Previously, the most expensive painting auctioned in Europe was Claude Monet's "Le bassin aux nymphéas," which

fetched \$80.4 million at a Christie's sale in 2008.

The piece sold Tuesday was the last portrait Klimt completed before his death in 1918. The painting shows an unidentified woman against a resplendent, China-influenced backdrop of dragons and lotus blossoms.

It was last sold in 1994, going for \$11.6 million at an auction in New York.

Sotheby's said the buyer was art adviser Patti Wong, acting on behalf of a Hong Kong collector.

## Spacey faces sex assault trial on decade-old allegations



Spacey

LONDON (AP)—Two-time Oscar winner Kevin Spacey is going on trial Wednesday in a London court on charges of sexually assaulting four men as long as two decades ago.

Spacey, 63, has pleaded not guilty to a dozen charges including sexual assault, indecent

assault and causing a person to engage in sex activity without consent. He could face a prison sentence if convicted.

Spacey has said an acquittal in the case could revive a career that has largely been on ice since sexual misconduct allegations surfaced against the star who won his first Academy Award for supporting actor in "The Usual Suspects" in 1995.

"There are people right now who are ready to hire

me the moment I am cleared of these charges in London," Spacey said in a rare interview published this month in Germany's Zeit magazine. He said the media had turned him into a "monster."

The charges involving men now in their 30s or 40s date from 2001 to 2013 — covering most of the decade when he lived in Britain and served as artistic director of the Old Vic Theatre until 2015.

## Aunt is afraid that helping nephew may carry high cost

**DEAR ABBY:** I come from a very close family, and I am the rock of the family. If someone needs help, I'm the one they come to. Recently, my nephew has been in a downward spiral because of drugs. He is now in jail.

He is only 19 and was always an amazing young man, but he started on the wrong road after witnessing his father take his own life a few years ago. When he gets out of jail, he wants to start over—come live with me, go to rehab and begin a new life.

My problem is my fiancé. He does not want to help my nephew, especially if he will be on house arrest. I know my nephew's potential, and I can't throw him away and refuse to help. How do I get my fiancé to understand this without jeopardizing our relationship?

CARING AUNT IN INDIANA

**DEAR AUNT:** It may be a challenge, considering the role you have assumed as "the rock of the family." What your nephew witnessed was horrific. Compounding the tragedy is the fact that he didn't receive counseling for the trauma and turned instead to drugs.

I understand your desire to take in your nephew, and I also understand your fiancé's reluctance to have a substance-addicted relative under house arrest in your (and his, I assume) home.

Perhaps you could agree to a compromise. Lock up

your valuables and give your nephew a temporary tryout with the understanding that if he lapses, he goes straight to rehab and a halfway house. You could then support his recovery in other ways, like helping him find a group such as Survivors of Suicide or one that supports sufferers of PTSD.

■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** I'm a professional travel adviser who works on commission. Many of my clients are friends or relatives, and I sincerely appreciate their patronage. Many years ago, my husband and I became friends with a delightful couple. We patronized the husband's business, and they introduced us to many of their friends. We sponsored them into a social club, and they made many new friends because of it. We have entertained them in our home numerous times for private dinners and summer pool parties.

They booked an inexpensive cruise through me once. Unfortunately, a few years ago there was a disagreement, and we prevailed. In retribution, they distanced themselves from us. They travel with many of the friends they introduced us to, and since then, the entire group arranges their travel through someone else, although they still accept our dinner and party invitations.

It's distressing that the spite of one couple has soured our relationships with two other couples who apparently feel closer to them. I consider the others to be "collateral damage," and we have distanced ourselves from them, too. Am I too sensitive?

TRAVELING AWAY IN TEXAS

## DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN  
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



**DEAR TRAVELING:** I don't think so. As you stated, these people were always closer to the couple who distanced themselves from you after the disagreement than they were with you. It may be disappointing, but it isn't a big personal loss. A loss of income, yes, but that's business, and business is replaceable. It's time to start cultivating some new friends, and this time, don't mix business with pleasure, which, as you have learned the hard way, can be risky.

■ ■ ■

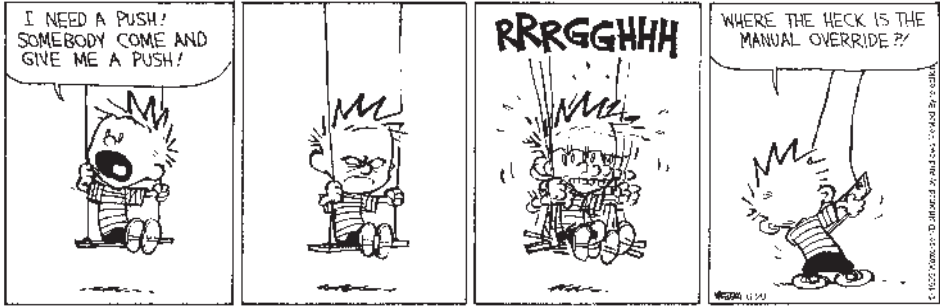
To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)



# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



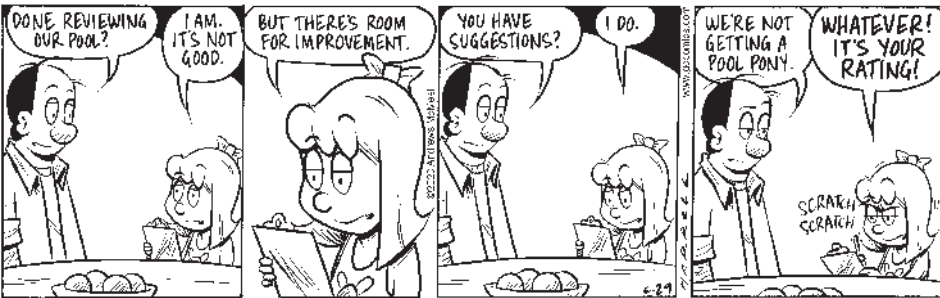
## Garfield®

By Jim Davis



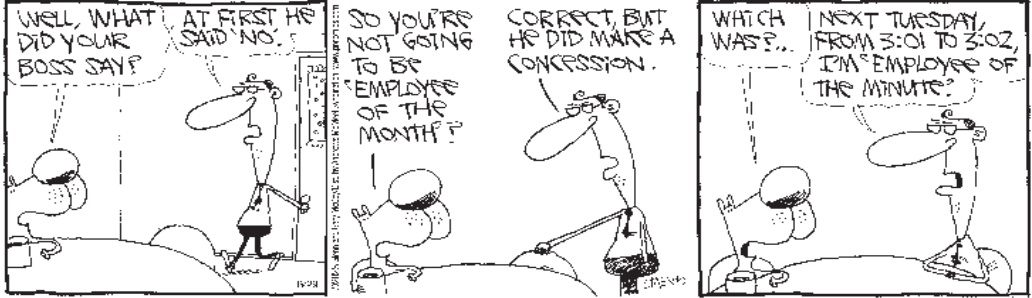
## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



## CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 — Wilson, whose alter ego is the title character in 2018's "Deadpool 2"

5 Bro, maybe

8 Queue after Q

12 Israeli airline

13 — Maria (coffee liqueur)

14 Comic actor Roscoe

15 Tora —

16 Televised

17 Like ganders

18 Casino customer

20 Played loudly

22 Conclusion

23 They play before blockbusters

24 Cold War news agency

27 Ship in 1898

32 Flight stat

33 Filming site

34 "Gosh!"

35 Chinese brew

**DOWN**

2 Body lotion ingredient

3 Scurry

4 Cheers up

5 2007 summer movie based on a Neil Gaiman book

6 King Charles —

7 Biting remark

8 Holiday Inn rival

9 Zodiac symbol

10 Conference leader?

11 Second-hand

19 Atop

21 Felon's flight

**Solution time: 24 mins.**

**Yesterday's answer 6-29**

**STUMPED?**

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

## CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:

Camila Mendes, 29; Nicole Scherzinger, 45; Melora Hardin, 56; Gary Bussey, 79.

**Happy Birthday:** Live and learn. Practice what you preach, and be true to yourself and honest with others. Focus on discipline, accomplishment and adjusting to your circumstances this year. Rely on your experience and the connections you nurture; the result will not disappoint. Embrace something that makes you strive to be at your best. Don't take health or love for granted. Your numbers are 9, 17, 24, 33, 35, 41, 47.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** Communication is mandatory. Don't guess when all you must do is ask. Get your facts straight and act on your behalf. The more information you have, the broader your vision and the greater your chance to succeed. Trust in yourself to do what's best. \*\*\*

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** Don't stop until you are satisfied with the results. Reach out to those you can count on to pitch in and help without supervision. A change of attitude will make your life easier. Stand up for your beliefs and direct your attention accordingly. \*\*\*

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Pay attention to how you present yourself and your space to others. Going the extra mile to ensure you have left nothing to chance will help eliminate any threat of interference. Stick close to home and protect what you own and love. \*\*\*

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** Think matters through, learn all you can and act accordingly. Participate in events that offer insight into how to navigate what's

trending. Share your thoughts and feelings, and discuss issues that can help bring you closer to someone you love. \*\*\*\*\*

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Outside influences will not go as planned. You should work on self-improvement, eating properly, exercise and getting along with the people you love. Refuse to let your emotions take over, causing friction or unwanted change at home or work. \*\*

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** Push forward with confidence. It's up to you to bring about positive change. Communication will keep you out of trouble and encourage others to support the changes you want to embrace. Incorporate more people and pastimes that bring you joy. Share your feelings. \*\*\*\*

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** Don't take on what you can't handle. If you leave yourself in a vulnerable position, someone will take advantage of you. Focus on what you can do to improve your life and keep others from interfering with your plans. \*\*\*

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Express your intentions. A plan that leads to stability and satisfies your creative imagination will help you find your happy place. Change begins with you; make opportunities manifest instead of waiting for someone else to do it. \*\*\*

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Live and learn. Try something new, and you'll discover a way to turn it into a profitable endeavor. Don't trust others to suggest what's best for you. Take better care of yourself, and change only what suits your needs. Romance is favored. \*\*\*\*\*

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Review the ups and downs of your lifestyle, living arrangements and space. You are overdue for a change that will lift your spirits and ease your mind. Talking seriously with someone close to you will help you decide your next move. \*\*\*\*

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Take a deep breath and consider what's best for you. Focus on caring for yourself and those you love and eliminating whatever is between you and your happiness. Defuse emotional situations before they spin out of control. Reboot your life. \*\*

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Spread your joy. Positive pep talks will be received well and bring you closer to someone you love and respect. Revamp how you handle your cash or what you do for a living. It's essential to take the road that soothes your soul. \*\*\*\*\*

**Birthday Baby:** You are spontaneous, helpful and determined. You are thoughtful and wise.

☾: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

## SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

		9	8				5	2				
7				2				4				
				5								
	5		6					9	2			
	3	2						8	6			
9	6	7		8				1				
										9		
6		3			1			5	4			
		8		4	2							

Difficulty: ★★★

6/29

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

2	6	1	3	4	9	7	8	5
4	9	8	6	5	7	2	1	3
5	7	3	1	2	8	4	9	6
7	5	4	2	1	6	9	3	8
8	3	6	7	9	5	1	2	4
9	1	2	8	3	4	6	5	7
1	2	7	4	8	3	5	6	9
3	4	5	9	6	1	8	7	2
6	8	9	5	7	2	3	4	1

Difficulty: ★★★

## WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle: — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

IT'S RENEWAL TIME

Solution: 7 letters

N O I T P I R C S B U S O V  
C U R R E N T N E M U C O D E  
N S M S T I C K E R A E Y I H  
O E N B T I M R E P B N T G I  
I R O A E V I S A U O N R I C  
T V I D A R I Y L I E E O T L  
A I S G C D M C T M L C P A E  
C C N E E E I A E I I I S L C  
I E E N N T M R C O A F S E U  
F N T T I R I E N V M F A V P  
I I X Z I U N T I M E O P A O  
T L E F Q S D R O C E R T R L  
R N N E E R O T S U B M I T I  
E O R G A N I Z A T I O N F C  
C I N O R T C E L E X P I R Y

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Badge, Certification, Citizen, Club, Confirmation, Current, Digital, Document, Electronic, Expiry, Extension, License, Mail, Number, Office, Online, Organization, Passport, Payment, Permit, Policy, Record, Requirement, Resident, Service, Sticker, Store, Submit, Subscription, Time, Travel, Vehicle, Verify, Visa, Vows, Year  
**Yesterday's Answer: Mr. Sunshine**

To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit [www.WonderWordBooks.com](http://www.WonderWordBooks.com), or call 1-800-642-6460. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)



# Struggling Mets slug 4 homers in a 7-2 win over Brewers



**NEW YORK**  
(AP) —

Brandon Nimmo homered twice and David Peterson threw six scoreless innings in his return to the majors as the struggling Mets beat the Milwaukee Brewers 7-2 Tuesday night, hours after New York owner Steve Cohen announced plans to hold a press conference on the state of the team.

The Mets, who opened this season with a record \$355 million payroll, won for the third time in 10 games and for the sixth time in 22 games, improving to 36-43.

Cohen grabbed everyone's attention earlier in the day when he announced a Wednesday press conference on Twitter saying: "I will be doing a press conference tomorrow before the game. You will get it from me straight."

The Mets, who were coming off a three-hit, 2-1 loss Monday night, slugged four homers as Francisco Lindor and Daniel Vogelbach joined Nimmo in going deep. Peterson (2-6) allowed eight baserunners, five hits and three walks while striking out five.

The Brewers Brian Anderson ended the combined shut-out bid with a two-run single in the eighth off Jeff Brigham. Julio Teheran (2-3) took the loss after retiring the first nine batters on just 34 pitches.

## ANGELS 4, WHITE SOX 2

**ANAHEIM, Calif.** (AP)—Shohei Ohtani became the first American League pitcher in nearly 60 years to hit two homers and strike out 10 batters in a game, leading Los Angeles past Chicago.

Ohtani, who leads the majors with 28 home runs, hit solo shots in the first and seventh innings, the first time he has gone deep twice while also pitching. Ohtani (7-3) struck out 10, allowed one run on four hits and walked two in a 6 1/3-inning start that ended because of a cracked fingernail.

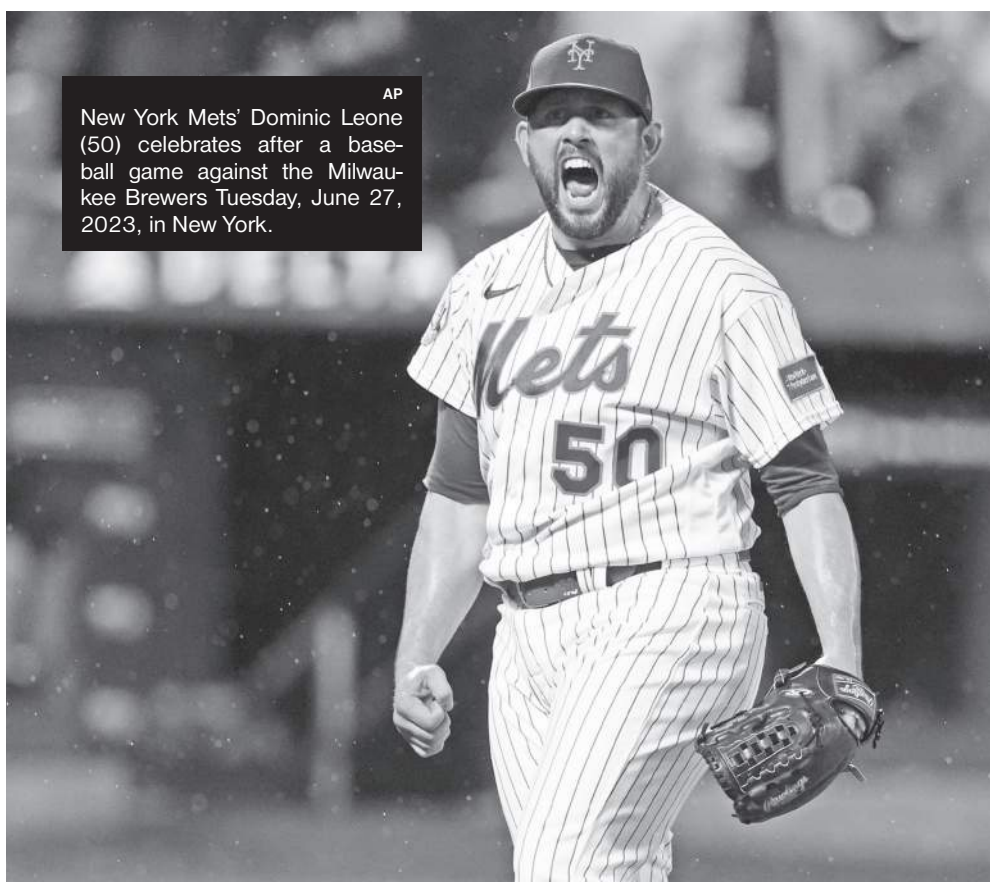
The last AL player before Ohtani to hit at least two homers and strike out at least 10 was Cleveland's Pedro Ramos on July 31, 1963.

Ohtani had half of Los Angeles' six hits, going 3-for-3 with a walk. Mike Moustakas had two hits and an RBI.

## DODGERS 5, ROCKIES 0

**DENVER** (AP)—Clayton Kershaw carried a no-hitter into the sixth inning, J.D. Martinez homered twice to reach 300 for his career, and Los Angeles blanked Colorado.

Kershaw (10-4) gave up one hit and faced the mini-



AP  
New York Mets' Dominic Leone (50) celebrates after a baseball game against the Milwaukee Brewers Tuesday, June 27, 2023, in New York.

mum in six innings, throwing only 79 pitches. He struck out two. He got the first two batters in the sixth before Brenton Doyle looped a 2-2 curveball between third and short to end his no-hit bid. Evan Phillips picked up his 11th save.

## DIAMONDBACKS 8, RAYS 4

**PHOENIX** (AP)—Corbin Carroll and Christian Walker hit back-to-back homers in a five-run first, Evan Longoria also homered against his former team and Arizona beat Tampa Bay.

Ketel Marte also homered for the Rays, who still have the best record in the big leagues at 54-28, but have lost six of their last nine games.

The D-backs scored five runs in the first off Rays starter Taj Bradley. Carroll hit a three-run homer to center and Walker followed with a solo homer to left field to make it 4-0. Gabriel Moreno's sacrifice fly made it 5-0.

The first two Tampa Bay runs in the second came home on wild pitches, Christian Bethancourt added an RBI groundout and Jose Siri hit a solo homer.

## ATHLETICS 2, YANKEES 1

**OAKLAND, Calif.** (AP)—Paul Blackburn pitched into the sixth inning, allowing one run on Josh Donaldson's homer in his return to the lineup in Oakland's win over New York.

The slumping Donaldson connected in the fifth in his first action since Friday, but that was it for New York.

Seth Brown homered for the second consecutive day as the last-place A's beat the Yankees for the first time this season after they were swept

in a three-game series in the Bronx in May.

## BRAVES 6, TWINS 2

**ATLANTA** (AP)—Ronald Acuña Jr. hit two of Atlanta's five homers—all in the first two innings—in a win over Minnesota.

Acuña sparked the barrage of long balls by hitting Ryan's first pitch into the Braves' bullpen in right field. The Braves lead the majors with 146 homers. The NL East-leading Braves hit five homers in its first 10 at-bats in winning their fourth straight game and for the 12 time in 13 outings.

Austin Riley hit a two-run shot and Sean Murphy also hit a homer in the Braves' four-run first inning. Michael Harris II and Acuña added back-to-back shots in the second. Bryce Elder (6-1) overcame four walks to allow two runs in six innings, leaving his NL-leading ERA at 2.44.

## GIANTS 3, BLUE JAYS 0

**TORONTO** (AP)—Thairo Estrada had a two-run double and scored a run, Alex Wood and three relievers combined on an eight-hitter as San Francisco won for the 13th time in 15 games and improved to 10-0 on the road in June.

After opener Ryan Walker pitched the first, Wood (3-2) followed with five-plus innings, allowing five hits. He walked none and struck out seven.

## MARLINS 10, RED SOX 1

**BOSTON** (AP)—Bryan De La Cruz hit a two-run homer, Jean Segura added a solo shot and Florida banged out 19 hits and beat Boston for its fourth win in five games.

Jazz Chisholm contributed

three RBIs in his return from a 38-game absence with a right turf toe injury. Garrett Cooper added two RBIs, Jorge Soler had an RBI double, and Joey Wendle finished with four hits. Sandy Alcántara (3-6) gave up one run and six hits while striking out five.

Luis Arraez struck out for the first time since June 14. He had a single and RBI double to extend his hitting streak to 10 games. He went 2 for 5 and his batting average stayed at .399.

Alex Verdugo provided the lone RBI for the Red Sox, losers of three straight and five out of six. Starter Garrett Whitlock (4-3) was pulled after 4 2/3 innings, yielding six runs and 11 hits.

## CARDINALS 4, ASTROS 2

**ST. LOUIS** (AP)—Jordan Montgomery pitched six-hit ball into the seventh inning in his second straight win, and St. Louis beat Houston.

Paul DeJong homered for St. Louis and Nolan Arenado had two hits, including an RBI double in the first meeting between the teams since the Cardinals dropped two of three against Houston in July 2019.

Montgomery (5-7) permitted six hits in 6 2/3 innings. Jordan Hicks earned his fifth save. Martin Maldonado homered for Houston, which dropped to 7-14 in its last 21 games. Framber Valdez (7-6) was charged with four runs and eight hits in six innings. He struck out six and walked three.

## PIRATES 9, PADRES 4

**PITTSBURGH** (AP)—Nick Gonzales homered and tripled in his first home game at PNC Park, and Pittsburgh beat San Diego.

Gonzales tripled in the sec-

ond inning for his first major league hit and poked a 442-foot solo homer in the seventh. Carlos Santana had three hits, including his seventh homer of the season. Andrew McCutchen collected three singles, rookie Henry Davis added two hits and outfielder Jack Suwinski ended an 0-for-29 funk by hitting a solo homer in the third.

Rich Hill (7-7) put together six steady innings in the rain. Roansy Contreras earned his first major league save.

San Diego starter Reiss Knehr (0-1) took the loss. Ha-Seong Kim had three hits and drove in two runs for San Diego. Nelson Cruz and Brandon Dixon added two hits each.

## PHILLIES 5, CUBS 1

**CHICAGO** (AP)—Brandon Marsh homered twice and drove in three runs, helping Philadelphia beat Chicago for its second straight win.

Lefty Ranger Suárez (2-2) pitched four-hit ball into the eighth inning in a game played in a strong smoky haze caused by Canadian wildfires. He was charged with one run and struck out eight in 7 1/3 innings.

Marsh hit a solo shot in the second and a two-run drive in the fifth in his second career multihomer game. Trea Turner and Nick Castellanos each hit an RBI single for Philadelphia, which has won three of four.

Chicago right-hander Jameson Taillon (2-6) was tagged for five runs and seven hits in five innings. He struck out eight and walked one. Nico Hoerner singled in Chicago's lone run in the eighth off Gregory Soto.

## GUARDIANS 2, ROYALS 1

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** (AP)—Gavin Williams held Kansas City to one hit through seven innings in his second major league start, Will Brennan hit a two-run double in the ninth inning, and Cleveland rallied past the Royals.

Kansas City had broken a scoreless tie in the eighth on a comebacker by Nicky Lopez against Trevor Stephan (4-3), who threw wildly to the plate while trying to cut down the run.

Emmanuel Clase worked around another error in the ninth to complete the two-hitter and earn his 24th save.

Guardians manager Terry Francona missed the game. He felt ill earlier Tuesday and was taken to a hospital to be evaluated because of his medical history.

Williams, Cleveland's top

pitching prospect, struck out six, walked one and needed only 92 pitches to get through seven innings.

## RANGERS 8, TIGERS 3

**ARLINGTON, Texas** (AP)—Ezequiel Duran's solo home run into the second deck in left sparked a five-run eighth inning as Texas topped Detroit.

Duran's homer, his 10th of the season, came on a 3-2 pitch by Brendan White (1-2), the 12th pitch of the at-bat. Texas then pulled away with RBI hits by Corey Seager and Nathaniel Lowe, and Adolis Garcia's two-run homer, all off Anthony Misiewicz.

The rally made a winner of Josh Sborz (4-2), who gave up a tying homer to Spencer Torkelson in the top of the inning to end his run of 17 consecutive scoreless innings.

Miguel Cabrera and Tyler Nevin had RBI singles in the second inning to give Detroit a 2-0 lead.

## REDS 3, ORIOLES 1

**BALTIMORE** (AP)—Andrew Abbott struck out eight and Matt McLain and TJ Friedl homered in Cincinnati's win over Baltimore in a game delayed for 1 hour, 43 minutes by rain following the seventh inning.

McLain also hit an RBI double for the Reds, who had dropped three in a row following a 12-game winning streak.

Abbott (4-0) allowed a run, two hits and three walks in six innings in his fifth career start. Alexis Diaz pitched a hitless ninth for his 22nd save in 22 chances.

Tyler Wells (6-4) allowed two runs and four hits in six innings. He struck out seven with one walk.

## NATIONALS 7, MARINERS 4, 11 INNINGS

**SEATTLE** (AP)—Jordan Weems worked out of a bases-loaded, none-out jam in the 10th inning against the heart of Seattle's order and Lane Thomas hit a two-run double in the 11th to give Washington the victory.

With two outs in the 11th and first baseman Ty France positioned off the bag, Thomas grounded a 1-0 pitch from Trevor Gott (0-3) down the right-field line to drive in Michael Chavis and Ildemaro Vargas. Luis Garcia followed with an RBI single.

Weems (1-0) struck out three in two innings.

Keibert Ruiz had a solo homer for Washington while Teoscar Hernández hit a two-run homer, his 15th of the season, for Seattle.



# 76ers face uncertain future with Harden, Harris deals up in air



**PHILADELPHIA** (AP)—James Harden might have side-eyed questions this week—much like he did in a playful reaction in his Houston days—about his future with the Philadelphia 76ers.

But the issue is real in Philly: Will Harden return to the 76ers for a third season?

All signs point to Harden declining his \$35.6 million option on Thursday and entering this summer as an unrestricted free agent. That leaves the 2018 NBA MVP and 10-time All-Star free to sign with any team.

A return to the Rockets? Perhaps, if he prioritizes cash over a championship chase. The 76ers? Depends. Does Harden really enjoy playing as the second option to NBA MVP Joel Embiid?

Plan C?

Harden might not have planned much beyond a potential Houston reunion or Sixers return. Philadelphia has the home-contract edge: The 76ers have the right to offer Harden a \$210 million, four-year deal, \$8 million more overall than any other team.

Houston, though, where Harden blossomed into a sure-fire Hall of Famer is a city that still tugs at his heart.

Nick Nurse, hired earlier this month to replace Doc Rivers as coach of the 76ers, wants a shot at coaching Harden.

“James has a decision to make, and I’d be very happy if he came back,” Nurse said when he was hired.

AP  
Philadelphia 76ers guard James Harden (1) calls to teammates during the first half of Game 5 against the Boston Celtics in the NBA basketball Eastern Conference semifinals playoff series, Tuesday, May 9, 2023, in Boston.



Tobias Harris, himself in a bit of a contract quandary this summer, also stumped for a Harden return as he grabbed rebounds and posed for selfies with children Tuesday at a Fanatics promotion.

“There’s not many guys that can go out and drop 40 in a playoff game. I think that goes under the radar a little bit too much,” Harris said. “I think James is a phenomenal player, somebody who works his tail off, and somebody’s who’s an overall great leader. Of course I want him back.”

Harden, who turns 34 in August, played the last few months with nagging left Achilles soreness and flashed only glimpses of his Houston prime. He scored 45 points in Game 1 and 42 in Game 4 victories of the

Eastern Conference semifinal loss against Boston, and was 0 for 6 on 3s in Game 2 and Game 6 losses. He scored only nine points in Game 7, and that included going scoreless in the second half.

Stuck in the muck of salary cap restrictions, the 76ers have few real options to replace Harden should he sign elsewhere. Not only that, the Sixers are fielding trade offers for Harris, who enters the final season of a \$180-million, five-year contract. Harris averaged 14.7 points last season, well behind NBA scoring champ Embiid, Harden and Tyrese Maxey.

Torrel Harris, Tobias Harris’ father and agent, blasted the way the 76ers have used Harris since 2018 and said on

the “Business of Sports” podcast his son was an “assassin scorer.”

“I mean, they can’t stop him,” Torrel Harris said on the podcast. “Nobody in the league can stop him. So he’s proven that over his career, even when he was with the Clippers.”

Harris has the all-important expiring contract that the 76ers can dangle as trade bait. While his dad believed Harris is still a prime scorer, the 76ers forward wants to put a freeze on public negotiations.

“When I’m a father, I’m going to tell my kid he’s better than LeBron James,” Harris said. “But I’ve also told him as a dad and agent, not to speak for me when it comes to the media. Obviously, he has his

viewpoint on that. But that’s not the way I feel. I knew going into last year what my role was and I was going to be the fourth option offensively. I knew that going in.”

Harris said he was “OK” with that role and knew if the 76ers were going to win a championship, he would be the player to “sacrifice from that group.”

Sometimes, the dip in production meant a dip in popularity.

“Trade speculation, casual Sixers fans, they would trade me for a Crumbl Cookie,” he said.

The cookie certainly crumbled for the Sixers for the playoffs, where they were eliminated in the second round for the third straight season. The

early exit for a team that won 54 games marked 22 seasons since the franchise reached the Eastern Conference finals. It cost Rivers his job.

It’s up to Nurse, who won a championship with Toronto in 2019, to find a formula that can win the 76ers a championship.

With or without Harden and Harris.

“I believe we have the right talent to be a championship team,” Harris said. “We have the right pieces and the right culture. With a new coach, I’m excited with what we can bring to the table.”

Harris and Embiid — who declined to talk about the Fanatics’ goodwill merchandise promotion for underserved kids — helped with the giveaway of 300,000 pieces of merch donated to around 100,000 kids and their families in nearly 100 different locations across the country.

Michael Rubin, CEO of Fanatics, also co-founded the Reform Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to probation, parole and sentencing reform in the United States. He once had an ownership stake in the 76ers, is a friend with Harden and tried not to pick a side on the contract issue.

So, should a 76ers fan buy in good faith a Harden 76ers jersey?

“I’d always tell them to buy a 76ers Harden jersey,” he said. “Look, I haven’t been close to the situation. Both the Sixers and James are family to me. But listen, I believe in these guys.”

## NBA BRIEFS

### Oladipo exercises \$9.5M option with Heat for this coming season

**MIAMI** (AP)—Victor Oladipo exercised his \$9.5 million option on Tuesday and is now under contract with the Miami Heat for this coming season. He tore his left patellar tendon during the first round of the playoffs against Milwaukee in April. The 31-year-old guard underwent his third major surgery in the last four years—the other two were on his right knee area—and there is no timetable for his return. Oladipo was a two-time All-Star with Indiana before getting hurt in January 2019. Indiana traded him to Houston in January 2021. The Rockets traded him to Miami two months later; he played four games in March 2021 with the Heat before getting hurt again. Oladipo appeared in just eight regular-season games in the 2021-22 season while recovering from a second surgery to repair his right quadriceps tendon. He got into 15 playoff games for Miami in 2022, then agreed on a two-

year deal to stay with the Heat last summer. He played in 42 games this season with Miami, his most in any regular season since 2017-18.

### Memphis Grizzlies exercise option on Xavier Tillman Sr.

**MEMPHIS, Tenn.** (AP)—The Memphis Grizzlies have exercised their contract option on Xavier Tillman Sr. for next season, the team announced Monday. The 24-year-old forward/center has averaged 6.2 points and 4.2 rebounds over 173 games in three seasons with Memphis. He averaged 7.0 points and 5.0 rebounds, both career bests, last season. Tillman was a second-round pick out of Michigan State in 2020.

### Bulls expect Lonzo Ball to miss another season because of left knee injury

**CHICAGO** (AP)—The Chicago Bulls expect point guard Lonzo Ball to miss another season because of his left knee injury. “Everything is going

well,” executive vice president of basketball operations Arturas Karnisovas said Thursday. “Going into the offseason, I think our expectation is that he’s not coming back next season and he’s going to continue on his recovery. If he comes back, it would be great.” Ball hasn’t played since Jan. 14, 2022. He had a cartilage transplant in March, his third operation on the knee in a little more than a year. Karnisovas said Ball stopped using crutches last month.

### Middleton has declined his player option for 2023-24 season

**MILWAUKEE** (AP)—Milwaukee Bucks general manager Jon Horst confirmed that Khris Middleton declined his player option for the upcoming season but added that the team hopes to keep the three-time All-Star forward. ESPN first reported that Middleton had opted against exercising the \$40.4 million option. “Khris is core to who we are and really all the success

we’ve had,” Horst said late Thursday night at a post-draft news conference. “Our goal is always to sustain our success and continue to compete and (have) a chance to win and be in position to win year in and year out. We hope to have him back.” Middleton, who turns 32 on Aug. 12, averaged 15.1 points, 4.9 assists and 4.2 rebounds in 33 games last season. He missed the first 20 games of the season while recovering from wrist surgery and sat out 18 straight games later in the season due to a sore right knee.

### Amile Jefferson leaving Duke to become Boston Celtics assistant

Duke assistant coach Amile Jefferson is leaving the Blue Devils to become an assistant with the NBA’s Boston Celtics, a person with knowledge of the situation said Wednesday. The person spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the Celtics haven’t publicly discussed their staff search.

The move was first reported by 247sports. The 30-year-old Jefferson worked under Jon Scheyer, who was in his first season facing the daunting task of replacing retired Hall of Fame coach Mike Krzyzewski. Jefferson had returned to Duke in July 2021 after a four-year professional career with stops in the NBA, then served as director of player development in Krzyzewski’s farewell season. Jefferson’s five year career as a Blue Devils player included 124 wins and the 2015 NCAA title, the fifth and final of Coach K’s career. In his final college season, he played with current Celtics star Jayson Tatum during Tatum’s lone season at Duke (2017). (AP)

### Jordi Fernandez to replace Nick Nurse as Canada coach

Sacramento assistant Jordi Fernandez is taking over for Nick Nurse as coach of the Canadian men’s basketball team that will compete at this summer’s World Cup, a person with knowledge of the

decision said Tuesday. Fernandez is also expected to remain in place should Canada qualify for the Paris Olympics in 2024, said the person, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the hiring had not been revealed publicly. ESPN first reported Fernandez’s hiring, which was subsequently confirmed by The Toronto Star and Sportsnet. Nurse had a contract to coach the Canadian team through the 2024 Olympics. He was fired as coach of the Toronto Raptors earlier this year and is now coach of the Philadelphia 76ers. Canada—which could have Jamal Murray of the NBA champion Denver Nuggets and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander of the Oklahoma City Thunder headlining its roster this summer—is scheduled to play at least five exhibition games before the World Cup starts on Aug. 25. The Canadians are in Group H of the World Cup, and will meet France, Latvia and Lebanon at Jakarta, Indonesia in the opening stage of the tournament. (AP)



# Palacios drops another 50-piece in Novice Class

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Beng Palacios topped the Novice Class of the June competition of the 2023 Monster Energy Point Series Race last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track.



By **MARK RABAGO**  
mark\_rabago@saipantribune.com  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Four races and four wins by perfect 50 points so far for Beng Palacios in the 2023 Monster Energy Point Series Race.

The 14-year-old incoming Marianas High School student won his division in the June competition anew by winning both heats last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track.

The June race follows his victories in the January, March, and

April editions of the race.

Last Sunday's race was the Marianas Racing Association's first in two months as they took a break following the club's participation in Guam's 40th Smokin' Wheels late last April.

Palacios beat Smokin' Wheels ATV Enduro race co-winner Christian "Hollywood" Camacho and Ponce Rasa who both finished second and third with 44 points and 38 points, respectively.



"The win was great. The race was good as it was a good day [for racing]. It's been a while since my last race but it felt good," said Palacios.

He said he was able to navigate the treacherous course conditions last Sunday thanks to his experience and performance of his Kawasaki kx250.

"The track conditions were crazy. It was very loose and slippery with some big rocks, but I managed to stay on two wheels

and fight through the race."

Palacios then dedicated his victory to his family, Trench Tech Racing, specifically his sponsors Justis "Cuki" Alvarez and his wife, Mari, and Melvin and Eleanor Cepeda.

In the Pee wee ATV, Nakoa Torres was the lone rider and got 50 points. Ditto for Elleayah Cruz and Anella Igitol in the Mini I and Mini ATV as they also went home with additional 50 points.

Results of the other classes in the June 2023 Monster Energy Point Series Race will be published in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

## Man Amigos power past Redmen, 17-7



LEIGH GASES

In this file photo, Man Amigos players pose for a group photo after one of their games in the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association League at the DanDan Softball Field.

The Man Amigos powered past the Redmen, 17-7, in the men's division semifinals of the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association League last June 11 at the DanDan Softball Field.

It was a battle between No. 5 Man Amigos and last place Redmen with the Man Amigos drawing first blood in the first inning.

After a measly three runs in two innings for the Redmen, the Man Amigos blew the game wide open in the fourth inning as they scored 12.

Before this, the game was tied at four apiece, but with a breakdown of Redmen pitching and the start of a red-hot Man Amigos offense, the game ended early on mercy-ruling.

The Redmen's Rick Bauer had a solo shot in the second inning, Lefty Shiro had one of his own in the third, followed by a two-run home run by pitcher Greg Magofna. Even

with the home runs, it wasn't enough to dissuade the Man Amigos from scoring runs.

The Man Amigos started their crushing blow to the Redmen with multiple base hits. Then two home runs registered off the bats of Manny Sablan and Joey Dela Cruz.

An additional grand slam by Vinnie Sablan cleared the bases and ensured a huge lead even before the inning ended.

They went twice through the lineup in that single inning and Mark Toves

too great to chip away at and scored only one run in the fourth and two in the last inning.

The other semifinals game between Peleliu and Hagu La'mun was re-

scheduled to this Sunday, July 2, at 10am with the men's championship game at 12pm.

The women's division championship Game 2 against the Lady Blue Jays and the Hot Shots is set for 11am.



## GROSS

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shot put and placed seventh and placed fourth in the discus throw.

For 19-year-old Igitol, she said, "Honestly, coming in third place caught me by surprise. I am fairly new to throwing the javelin and only had a couple of days to practice the

technique and get everything down. I was quite nervous to be throwing and so I didn't expect much from myself in this event since it was my first javelin competition."

She added, "My ultimate goal was to just show up, do my best and give it my all, which I did! Overall, I am extremely blessed with the outcome and beyond grateful

to be given the opportunity to take part in representing my home once again."

She thanked her coach, Elias Rangamar, the Northern Marianas Athletics team, and her family for supporting her in her journey. "I'd also like to extend my thanks to the OAA for an incredible experience," she said.

As for the 21-year-old Andrew, he said, "I don't really

know how to feel [about] getting bronze, I just got lucky. I did the discus, shot put, and hammer throw. I'd say I had a lot of fun during this competition. Although I didn't perform as well as I wish I could, I did learn a lot from all the different athletes and coaches."

Results of the master's events will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

## JINNO SUKE

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direct appointment to the U.S. Coast Guard, his acceptance in the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Scholars Program will allow him to enroll in the prep school for a year and once he completes it, he can get an appointment to the academy.

As for what he'll miss most about his home islands, Suzuki said it will definitely be his lifelong friends. Also forever seared in his memory are the countless training sessions at this old swim club.

"Something I'll never forget about swimming for Tsunami Saipan are the hard practices

that we had to go through everyday."

Tsunami Saipan coach Hiroyuki Kimura said Suzuki leaves the club as one of its better swimmers, adding he would've set many more records if the island still had the mothballed Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

"If we still have the Marpi pool or no COVID-19, Jinnosuke might add his name in the record list a lot. Though the situation was the same with Juhn Tenorio and Isaiah Aleksenko, I really feel so sorry for Jinnosuke, too. Jin had a strong possibility and big potential to reach Jonathan Sakovich's records which are so

long standing. I really wanted him to break Jon's record. In a way, it was also my dream. But that dream is now over."

Kimura also admitted that he tried to convince his former ward to continue swimming in college in Japan like what his teammate Tenorio did a year ago.

"I really encouraged him to continue swimming at a university in Japan. Because there were many Japanese university swim teams that suited him, and I had received offers from several head coaches. However, his will was firm and he chose the path to the U.S. Coast Guard. Now, Juhn Tenorio is making tremendous

progress on the Hosei University swimming team in Japan. I knew Jinnosuke would have done the same as Juhn in college swimming. So, as a swimming coach, I was so sad he stopped swimming, but I want to support his new dream."

Kimura said just the same he wishes Suzuki the best of luck in his new journey of now being part of the U.S. armed forces.

"Now, I am just grateful to Jinnosuke. It was really fun and I was happy to be his coach. I thank him and his family very much. I would like to continue to support his new journey as his former coach."

## PEREDO

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cause of his work schedule and the team finally won their last game last week to improve to 1-4.

As for his performance, the 44-year-old former IT&E employee said after scoring 20 points in his first game in the CBA, he has concentrated on defense and rebounding.

Peredo said he opted to play second fiddle on offense because Saipan CNMI 670 has a deadly shooter in the person of Salas, who is a deadly 3-point specialist. Salas incidentally is the nephew of Saipan referee Lito Salas.

He also jokingly attributed his poor play on offense lately to hanging out too much at In-N-Out Burger.

Peredo said both leagues are very competitive and in

the case of the CBA, even boasts of ex-professional players from the Philippines like Elmer Lago, who suited up for Shell Rimula X and Ginebra San Miguel in the Philippine Basketball Association.

As for the team's performance in both the CBA and Net Rippers Basketball League tournaments, Peredo said they're starting to gel and are finally becoming more comfortable with each other on the court.

Before moving to Lakewood, Washington in September last year, Peredo won multiple championships and took home a slew of regular season and finals MVPs. He was also a regular fixture in the mythical five of almost all the leagues he joined. He has also won best in rebounds, best in blocks, and scoring titles on many occasions.





Struggling Mets  
slug 4 homers  
in a 7-2 win over  
Brewers.

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# Saipan Tribune Sports

Palacios drops  
another 50-piece in  
Novice Class.

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20 THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 2023

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

## Gross, Igitol, Andrew, Schmidt place in throwing events

By LEIGH GASES  
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REPORTER

More CNMI athletes of the Oceania Cup had podium finishes in their respective field events and handed the team some points last Friday and Saturday at the Oleai Sports Complex.



Igitol



Nick Gross placed second in the men's javelin throw as he speared his way through with a distance of 45.56m. Melanesia's Karo Iga took first with his 52.04m throw and third went to NMI's Douglas Schmidt with a distance of 43.12m.

Maria Igitol placed third in the women's javelin throw with a distance of 26.50m. First place went to Melanesia's Sharon Taoko with a throw of 46.56m for a huge lead; second place went to Micronesia's Genie Gerardo with a distance of 27.11m; and fourth place went to the CNMI's Kina Rangamar with a throw of 23.87m.

Lyle Andrew also handed the CNMI more points as he threw a distance of 22.60m which was good enough for third place. Australia's Benjamin Voogd won first place with the farthest distance of 54.76m and second went to Polynesia's Elijah Poila with 22.96m.

Schmidt also competed in the high jump and triple jump and placed fourth in both events. He was also in the mixed 4x400m relay race with Cody Shimizu, Erin Frink, and Kaithlyn Chavez that took fourth place.

Igitol competed in the 100m invitational and placed sixth, in the 100m and placed 11th, and placed 14th in the 200m. For Andrew, he also joined the

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Gross

## Peredo suits up for 2 leagues in Washington

By MARK RABAGO  
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Former Blue Haus stalwart Eheroll Peredo is back in the hardwood again after suiting up for not one but two basketball leagues in the state of Washington.

The 5'10" forward currently plays for the Saipan CNMI 670 team in both the Casanova Basketball Association and the Net Rippers Basketball League.

Joining him in the squad are former Saipan residents Jaymark De Guzman, Albert Salas, Pat Tinio, Jed Villanueva, and Herbert Maranan.

The hospital distribution specialist said he's only played in two games in the Net Rippers League so far, where they

currently have a 3-4 record.

In the CBA, he has seen action in only two games be-

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Eheroll Peredo, third from right, poses with Saipan CNMI 670 teammates, from left, Albert Salas, Pat Tinio, Jed Villanueva, Herbert Maranan, and Jaymark De Guzman.

## Jinnosuke Suzuki enrolls at USCG prep school

By MARK RABAGO  
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Jinnosuke Suzuki is hanging up his swimming goggles and cap and bidding Saipan sayonara after enrolling in the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Scholars Program.

The former captain of Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center leaves a swimming career that saw him establish eight age records in the 11-12 age group—100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, and 1,200m freestyle, 50m butterfly, and 200m and 400m individual medley.

"I decided to apply for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy because my friend told me about it and it seemed like a good choice. I chose not to continue swimming in college because I have been swimming competitively for most of my life and wanted to try something different," he told Saipan Tribune.

The 17-year-old Marianas High School alumnus said while he didn't exactly get a

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jinnosuke Suzuki poses with Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan coach Hiroyuki Kimura as he's about to board a flight out of the Francisco M. Palacios-Saipan International Airport earlier last week.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jinnosuke Suzuki after swimming his event at the 2022 FINA World Championships in Melbourne, Australia.